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PETER CARTWRIGHT

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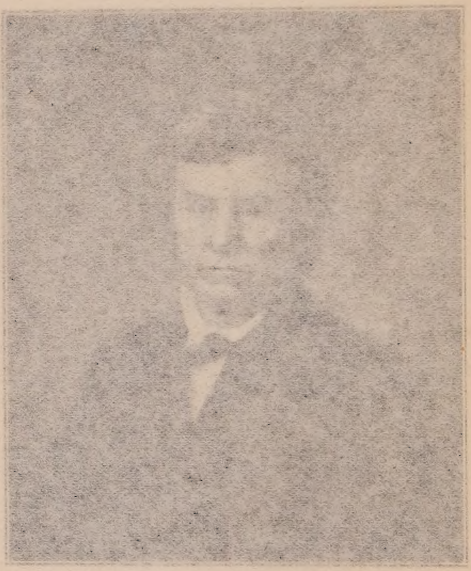
To
The Rev.d Grant Stewart
With the heartiest good
wishes of the Author
May 23. 1917.



PETER CARTWRIGHT

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By

PHILIP M. WATTERS

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

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10-8977 Revised

10-9-57

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FOREWORD

Our chief source of information concerning Peter Cartwright is his Autobiography, which was published in 1856. As a supplement to the Autobiography we have his Fifty Years a Presiding Elder, which was published in 1871, and so continues the narrative of his life to within about a year of his death. He himself declares with regret that much of the material for this life-story had not been preserved in a journal, but had been kept only in the chambers of his memory, where the shadows of old age were already obscuring it before it was committed to writing. It is reminiscence, not chronicle, and as such we receive it.

Next in importance as primary sources are the records of the General Conference from 1816 to 1868, and a little book containing some new material, which was edited by Dr. Abel Stevens, and published in 1861 under the title "Dr. Cartwright Portrayed." I would also call attention to an address delivered before the Illinois State Historical Society, at its annual meeting in 1902, by

President M. H. Chamberlin, of McKendree College, which shows original research on the subject of "Rev. Peter Cartwright, D.D."

The standard histories of the Methodist Episcopal Church have comparatively little to say about this remarkable man, and in the whole range of periodical literature we find a strange dearth of reference to him. Here the only articles which are worthy of special mention are two which appeared in the Methodist Quarterly Review for October, 1872, and January, 1873, entitled "Peter Cartwright, and Preaching in the West." These articles, which were published first in the Revue des Deux Mondes and were translated for the Quarterly, are of peculiar interest in that they give us a Frenchman's view of a prominent American Methodist.

CHAPTER I

THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

On the 3d of September, 1783, the treaty was signed at Paris which recognized the independence of the United States of America. On the 24th of December, 1784, the "Christmas Conference" was convened at Baltimore for the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. On the 1st of September, 1785, in Amherst County, Virginia, Peter Cartwright was born. So the birth of the boy almost synchronizes with the birth of the nation and of the Church which he loved so well, and to which he gave the service of his life.

The times were marvelously propitious for the nation, the Church, and the boy. The principles of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," which in Europe were beginning to assert themselves in the mad struggles of the French Revolution, were here established upon the firm basis of a constitutional democracy. A hardy and free people, united by the common sufferings of the war and disciplined by its struggles, were come

into the possession of a land which in its extent and in the richness of its resources held a promise unmeasured and unparalleled. The Great West, as yet almost untrodden by the white man's foot, was now to be explored and peopled and developed. For the infant Church, also, the times were most auspicious. With its missionary spirit and its militant genius, with its evangelistic note and its matchless polity, the Methodist Episcopal Church, of all the Protestant denominations, was best fitted to meet the wants of those pioneer days—to carry the gospel message into the remotest hamlets, and to organize the scattered converts into the disciplined life and service of Christ. And for the boy, born in a home of poverty and hardship, grappling from early childhood with the problems of a frontier life, fighting strong battles with the wild woods and still wilder men, these were times of wondrous hope. For history was making rapidly, and strong men were at a premium, and he who could win could have his own, and he who would lead could blaze the trail, and fix the bounds, and set the customs for men.

The father of Peter Cartwright was a soldier of the Revolution, and from him

the boy inherited a love of liberty and an ardent patriotism. His mother was a devout Methodist, and the power of her faith was on the boy, keeping his mind open to the light and holding his conscience keen to the voice of God, until he yielded his heart to Christ, and gave his life to the ministry of his mother's Church.

In 1791, when Peter Cartwright was about six years old, his father moved from Virginia to Kentucky. The intervening country, which to-day can be crossed in a few hours with all the comfort of our modern travel, was then an almost unbroken wilderness; and the journey to Kentucky was an undertaking of great hardship and danger. Not even the roughest wagon road had been opened up; but men and women, children and baggage had all to be carried on horseback. Hostile Indians lurked along the trail, making it necessary to travel in large companies for mutual defense. Two hundred families went in this one party, and with them rode a hundred young men to protect them from the redskins.

"After we struck the wilderness," says Cartwright, "we rarely traveled a day but what we passed some white persons mur-

dered and scalped by the Indians while going to or returning from Kentucky. Late one evening the party halted for the night at a place called 'Camp Defeat,' where a number of emigrant families had been all murdered by the savages a short time before." Here Cartwright's father, while standing guard, shot an Indian who was creeping up in the darkness hoping to cut off the sentinels. A few days afterward seven families who, worn out with the journey, lagged behind to sleep, refusing to press on to the fort at Crab Orchard, were massacred, only one man escaping to bring the news to the settlement.

In that day Kentucky was the common hunting ground of various Indian tribes; and, because it abounded in game, they fought stubbornly to keep it from the possession of the white settlers. Many were the massacres and many the battles before the white men finally conquered; so the region came to be known as the "Land of Blood."

After living for two years on a farm which he hired at the "Hanging Fork of Dick's River," in Lincoln County, Cartwright's father moved again to take a farm of his own in Logan County in "the Green

River country." In this section had congregated many rough fellows—reckless spirits, and refugees from justice—who defied all law and order and terrorized the other settlers; so that Logan County had come to be known as "Rogues' Harbor." The law-abiding men organized themselves into a band of "Regulators," for the defense of life and property, and fierce battles were fought with gun and knife and club between the Rogues and the Regulators, now one side and now the other being victorious, till at last the Rogues were subdued.

Let Cartwright tell us, in his own language, how they lived in those days. "When my father settled in Logan County," he says, "there was not a newspaper printed south of Green River, no mill short of forty miles, and no schools worth the name. Sunday was a day set apart for hunting, fishing, horse-racing, card-playing, balls, dances, and all kinds of jollity and mirth. We killed our meat out of the woods wild, and beat our meal and hominy with a pestle and mortar. We stretched a deerskin over a hoop, burned holes in it with the prongs of a fork, sifted our meal, baked our bread, ate it, and it was first-rate eating, too. We raised, or gathered out of the woods, our

own tea. We had sage, bohea, crossvine, spice, and sassafras teas in abundance. . . . We made our sugar out of the water of the maple tree, and our molasses too. We raised our own cotton and flax. We water-rotted our flax, broke it by hand, scutched it, picked the seed out of the cotton with our fingers; our mothers and sisters carded, spun, and wove it into cloth, and they cut and made our garments and bedclothes."

From such a boyhood environment we shall not look for "a man clothed in soft raiment," nor using soft language nor striking soft blows. The rugged strength of the wilderness will be in him, and he will despise soft things.

In that frontier home two strong influences were contending for the boy. His father, though he seems to have been a man of integrity, was not a Christian. While he opened his cabin for the preaching of the gospel when itinerant preachers came that way, he did not propose to make a preacher of his son. He gave him a race horse and a pack of cards, and encouraged him in the wild life which he had begun to lead, and which was already coming to have for him a fascination. "I was naturally a wild, wicked boy," he says, "and delighted in

horse-racing, card-playing, and dancing." And though we have no evidence that the lad ever entered into the grosser sins of intemperance and licentiousness which were so prevalent about him, he declares that he had already become an expert in gambling. But his mother kept up the religious life of the old Virginia days, reading her Bible and praying, attending her class each Sabbath when at last one was established at a distance of four miles from her home, training her boy to pray and to believe that God had a right to him, and exhibiting daily the power of God in her own Christian character. And when the day of decision came and the battle was fierce in the soul of the boy, it was not the soldier-father who triumphed in him, but the mother's influence prevailed.

One evening, when sixteen years of age, he accompanied his father and elder brother to a wedding party and spent most of the night in dancing. After he had ridden home and had cared for his horse and was warming himself at the fire, he began to reflect on the way he had been spending the night. He says, "I felt guilty and condemned. I rose and walked the floor. My mother was in bed. It seemed to me, all of a sudden,

my blood rushed to my head, my heart palpitated, in a few minutes I turned blind; an awful impression rested on my mind that death had come and I was unprepared to die. I fell on my knees and began to ask God to have mercy on me. My mother sprang from her bed and was soon on her knees by my side, praying for me and exhorting me to look to Christ for mercy; and then and there I promised the Lord that, if he would spare me, I would seek and serve him; and I never fully broke that promise."

But the light did not come that night, nor the next day. For three months he was under deep conviction of sin, fearing at times that he was utterly lost; seeming now to hear the voice of Christ in encouragement, and now to feel the devil present with a power which threatened to seize him and drag him down to hell. His friends feared that his mind would give way. Some tried to divert him and turn him back to his old life; others tried to show him the way of salvation. But still he struggled on, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, bearing the burden of his sin.

In the spring which followed this awakening a neighboring Presbyterian preacher

called a "sacramental meeting" in a grove near his church, and invited the Methodists to unite with his people in an evangelistic effort. There, after a sermon by John Page, a well-known Methodist preacher, Peter Cartwright found peace with God.

"In the midst of a solemn struggle of soul," he says, "an impression was made on my mind, as though a voice said to me, 'Thy sins are all forgiven thee.' Divine light flashed all around me, unspeakable joy sprung up in my soul. I rose to my feet, opened my eyes, and it really seemed as if I was in heaven. The trees, the leaves on them, and everything seemed, and I really thought were, praising God. . . . And though I have been since then, in many instances, unfaithful, yet I have never for one moment doubted that the Lord did then and there forgive my sins and give me religion."

So Peter Cartwright, for seventy-one years a soldier of Jesus Christ, fighting hard battles against Satan and all his hosts, and helping to release many souls from the prison house of sin—so Peter Cartwright turned his back upon the old wild life of his early youth, and set his face toward the prize of his "high calling in Christ Jesus."

In June of that same year, when John Page visited again the little church called Ebenezer, of which Cartwright's mother was a member, Peter Cartwright was received into its fellowship. "I have never for one moment regretted it," he says. "I have never for a moment been tempted to leave the Methodist Episcopal Church; and if they were to turn me out I would knock at the door till taken in again."

In that day the Western Conference comprised the whole of Methodism west of the Alleghany Mountains, with the exception of the societies in western Pennsylvania and western Virginia. Cartwright says the Conference had in its membership that year about fifteen traveling preachers, and embraced in all the societies within its bounds a church membership of two thousand four hundred and eighty-four. William McKendree was appointed to the Kentucky District, and a single circuit of this district, the Cumberland, had an itinerary of about six hundred miles, lying partly in Kentucky and partly in Tennessee.

A great revival was sweeping through this frontier territory, and young Cartwright threw himself with all the zeal of his first love into the evangelistic campaign.

Already, in the secret of his own thoughts, he was much perplexed by the recurring impression that he ought to preach; but he took no man into his counsel, and was greatly surprised when, at a quarterly meeting in the spring of 1802, Jesse Walker, his preacher in charge, handed him a slip of paper on which was written:

"Peter Cartwright is hereby permitted to exercise his gifts as an Exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so long as his practice is agreeable to the Gospel. Signed in behalf of the Society at Ebenezer, May, 1802. JESSE WALKER, A. P."

He protested that he did not need and did not wish a license to exhort; but his pastor persuaded him to accept it. So, at the age of seventeen, by the twofold call of the Spirit and the Church, his face was set toward the Christian ministry.

In the fall of that year his father again changed his home, moving down into the wild country near the mouth of the Cumberland River. There was not a Methodist circuit within eighty miles of the place; there was not even a class meeting in the whole region. But there were isolated Methodist families scattered through the section, and Cartwright asked John Page

for a church letter for his mother, his sister, and himself. Great was his consternation when he examined the document which had been given him. He found that it contained what he calls a "Benjamin's mess." It not only recognized him as a member and an exhorter, but gave him authority "to travel through all that destitute region, hold meetings, organize classes, and, in a word, to form a circuit." He was directed to do the work, tabulate the results, and present the completed plan at the fourth Quarterly Conference of the Red River Circuit, to be held the following autumn. Again he protested, urged in objection his unfitness for the work, and declared his intention of going to school the next year and making up as far as possible the sad defects in his education. He was informed that this work in itself would afford him the best possible schooling for the ministry, and that he need devote to it only the spring and summer months, reserving the fall and winter for study. Yielding to the judgment of his pastor, he accepted, though but a lad of eighteen years, a task which would have taxed the strength and the wisdom of a mature man.

Immediately after settling in his new

home he sought out a school; and there, studying eagerly through the day, though he devoted his evenings to meetings for prayer and exhortation, he was soon making good progress. But his fellow students, rebuked by his earnestness and his religious zeal, dubbed him "The Methodist Preacher," and began at once to ridicule and persecute him, being encouraged in this course by the teacher, a bigoted and intemperate seceder from the Methodist ministry. For a time Cartwright bore these attacks with patience, carefully restraining himself from retaliation. But finally, when two of the ringleaders, pretending that they wished him to pray for them, had lured him to the bank of the creek and there had tried to duck him, he turned upon them with such sudden fury that he threw them both into the water. This act stirred up against him such a storm of abuse that he decided to leave the school. So, with great regret, he ended his school days, and, giving himself with all energy to the work of his ministry, came up in the fall able to report to his preacher in charge seventy received into church membership, classes formed, leaders appointed, and the Livingston Circuit organized.

Such remarkable success won by a mere boy of eighteen years did not fail to attract attention; and his presiding elder, Lewis Garrett, came to him and urged him to accept the position of junior preacher in the Red River Circuit. So for the third time the call of the Church was on his ear and the call of God was on his spirit; and he struggled in the valley of decision.

His father was unwilling to give up to the ministry a son of such promise; but his mother threw all the weight of her influence in favor of the call, believing it to be God's will that he should preach.

The life of the Methodist itinerant as Peter Cartwright had seen it was not a career to appeal to the selfish ambition of a young man. There were then no furnished parsonages and comfortable stations where a preacher might enjoy the refinements of community life and the pleasures of a home. There was little probability that a man entering the itinerancy in that day and place would ever be able to support a wife, for the income was so bare that even a single man found it possible to live on what he received only by keen resourcefulness and strict economy. The circuits were hundreds of miles in extent, and had

to be traveled on horseback where frequently not even a well-defined trail marked the way, through forest and prairie, over mountains and unbridged streams.

It was to a bleak, bare life of hardship and suffering, of privation and poverty, of toil for the body and weariness for the spirit, that Peter Cartwright was called as, just over the threshold of his nineteenth year, he stood looking forward. But it was to a life of fellowship with Christ—fellowship in his sufferings but also fellowship in his joy—a life devoted to the salvation of men for whom Christ died, and to the establishment of the kingdom in which Christ reigns. It was to a life of hard fighting but sure victory with God; and he said, "I will go!"

"I literally gave up the world," he says, "and started, bidding farewell to father and mother, brothers and sisters." He mounted his horse, and set out to join his senior preacher, Ralph Lotspeich, at an appointment in Logan County.

When he reached his destination he was informed that he was to preach that evening; and though he begged to be excused, declaring that he was only an exhorter and had never tried to preach, he was urged to make the attempt. Finally consenting, he

went out and prayed earnestly that God would help him to speak that night, and would give him the proof of his call to the ministry in the conversion of a soul. Let him tell what followed. He says: "I went into the house, took my stand, gave out a hymn, sang, and prayed. I then rose and gave them for a text Isaiah 26. 4, 'Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' The Lord gave light, liberty, and power; the congregation was melted into tears. There was present a professed infidel. The word reached his heart by the Eternal Spirit. He was powerfully convicted, and, as I believe, soundly converted to God that night, and joined the Church, and afterward became a useful member of the same."

After traveling the Red River Circuit for three months he was transferred to the Waynesville Circuit, where he finished out the year; and in the fall of 1804, when just entering his twentieth year, he was admitted into the membership of the Western Conference. So began the career of Peter Cartwright as a traveling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church—a career among the most remarkable in all the history of Methodism.

On the 18th of August, 1808, he married Miss Frances Gaines, a young woman whose heroism of Christian character was equal to his own. She lived to share with him to the end the joys and sorrows of his itinerant life, and to merit the frequent praise of her husband and the devotion of her nine children.

For sixty-five years Peter Cartwright served in the active ranks of the Methodist ministry—eight years in the old Western Conference, eight years in the Tennessee Conference from its organization in 1812, four years in the Kentucky Conference from its organization in 1820, and forty-five years in the Illinois Conference from the organization of that Conference in 1824 until his superannuation in 1869.

He was ordained deacon by Bishop Asbury in 1806, and was ordained elder by Bishop McKendree in 1808. He was appointed presiding elder by Bishop Asbury in 1812, and served in that office fifty years in all, the last forty-three being consecutive. He was elected thirteen times to membership in the General Conference, and there took a prominent place and exerted a strong influence in the legislation of the Church. He received the degree of "Doctor of Divinity"

from McKendree College in 1845. He was a chaplain in the army under General Jackson, and was present at the battle of New Orleans. He was a lifelong Democrat, and was twice elected from Sangamon County to the General Assembly of Illinois. He also ran for Congress from that State, and was defeated by no less an opponent than Abraham Lincoln. His home for nearly fifty years was at Pleasant Plains, Illinois, and there he died on the 25th of September, 1872.

CHAPTER II

THE PIONEER EVANGELIST

We have seen how many-sided was the life of this man, and through how many channels of influence its activities went out; but we find one central purpose correlating and dominating all these activities, as the life had its energy from one supreme source. Christ was its fountain, its well-spring of power; and to reveal Christ to others, to proclaim the good news of salvation to lost men—this was the central purpose, the controlling motive of Peter Cartwright's career.

Speaking of his call to preach, he says: "If I had been seeking for money I would not have traveled, for I knew that I could have made more money splitting rails than I could traveling a circuit when I started. It was not honor, there was no honor about it. It was to fulfill my own convictions of duty." And in the picture which he gives us of an "old-fashioned Methodist preacher," which in fact is a picture of his own early life, he shows us what was this

conviction of duty under which he went out. "A Methodist preacher in those days," he says, "when he felt that God called him to preach, instead of hunting up a college or biblical institute, hunted up a hardy pony of a horse, and some traveling apparatus, and with his library always at hand, namely, a Bible, Hymn Book, and Discipline, he started, and with a text that never wore out or grew stale he cried, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.' In this way he went through storms of wind, hail, snow, and rain, climbed hills and mountains, traversed valleys, plunged through swamps, swam swollen streams, lay out all night, wet, weary, and hungry, held his horse by the bridle all night, or tied him to a limb, slept with his saddle blanket for a bed, his saddle or saddlebags for his pillow, and his old big coat or blanket, if he had any, for a covering. . . . His text was always ready: 'Behold the Lamb of God.' "

This was indeed the text which never wore out, the message of his life which never grew stale. Not that he was lacking in variety of texts. He was a constant and earnest student of the Bible and a masterful preacher of the Word of God.

Not that his preaching was always of the hortatory kind. He was strong in theology, dealing mighty blows against Arian and Calvinist, and demolishing Baptists and Campbellites with thrusts of wit and subtleties of argument. Not that he failed to appreciate the duty of a preacher to lead his people into wide fields of truth, and to help the life of the community in its many-sided want. He was an eager reader of good books, and had a wonderful command of what he had read for use in sermon or address or debate; and he was a genuine patron of good reading in the many homes which he visited. He claimed that during the first fifty years of his ministry he had distributed ten thousand dollars' worth of literature through the scattered hamlets of the frontier. He was a friend of learning and a supporter of schools and an enthusiastic ally of reform. But the roads were long through circuit and district, and the preacher came but seldom to his flock. He could not stop to follow up the word and apply it to all the developments of life. He could bring men to Christ, and leave them to him as Teacher and Guide; but he must hurry on to lift up his voice in other dark places where men were dying in sin. Be-

cause of the awful need of the sheep in the wilderness he could not tarry with the sheep in the fold. The saints must be looking for edification while sinners were looking for mercy. So this was the message which burned in the heart of the preacher as he rode alone through the woods, and flamed on his lips as he looked into the faces of men whose souls were committed to him, and for whose lives he would answer to God: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." This is the text which Peter Cartwright took; and his life is the sermon.

He was especially happy in camp meetings. "I was converted on a campground," he says, "and for many years of my early ministry, after I was appointed presiding elder, lived in the tented grove from two to three months of the year. . . . I am very certain that the most successful part of my ministry has been on the campground."

Both Methodists and Presbyterians held their camp meetings in those days, and looked forward to them eagerly as times of refreshing for the Christian and salvation for the sinner. They were the great events of the whole year. Cartwright gives an interesting description of the preparation

and the gathering of the people. He says: "They would erect their camps with logs, or frame them, and cover them with clapboards or shingles. They would also erect a shed, sufficiently large to protect five thousand people from wind and rain, and cover it with boards or shingles; build a large stand, seat the shed, and here they would collect together from forty to fifty miles around, sometimes further than that. Ten, twenty, and sometimes thirty ministers, of different denominations, would come together and preach night and day, four or five days together; and indeed I have known these camp meetings to last three or four weeks."

In this great assembly were brought together not only those who came to pray and to work, but men and women of every kind and condition were caught, as in the meshes of an invisible net, and drawn to the hearing of the gospel. Many who came in idle curiosity or drifted in they knew not why, or gathered in quest of social gayety or with malignant purpose to disturb or even to break up the meeting—many sinners with whom God had an appointment of which they little dreamed—were smitten by the power of the Holy

Ghost, and pressed forward to the stand with cries for mercy, or fell where they had been standing, and lay like dead men.

Wonderful were the conversions witnessed at such times. Rivals who had come with dirk and pistol, each vowing that he would kill the other on sight, gave up their arms as they knelt in penitence, and rising from their knees with shouts of salvation clasped each other in their arms. Gangs of rough men, who had ridden in to jeer at the preacher and terrorize the company, found themselves helpless; and, quailing before the word of truth, were plucked like brands from the burning. Notorious infidels who scoffed at the teachings of Christ, and declared that they feared neither God nor devil, seemed suddenly to see hell opening before them, and, calling upon the people to pray for their deliverance, wrestled mightily under the burden of their sins, until coming out into the light they leaped and sang for joy.

Amid such scenes as this Peter Cartwright, as a preacher, was almost without a peer. He had a clear, strong, bass voice, which he seldom strained even in times of strongest emotion, and by which he could catch the ear and hold the attention of

thousands. He could sing, exhort, and pray day and night the whole week through, and not grow weary. He had a marvelous memory which held ready for his using not only what he had gathered from books, but the rich store of adventure and incident which was crowded into his own life. He read men—read them as he looked into their faces, and quickly adapted himself in theme and manner and illustration to the time and the place. He had prepared for his work, not in college and seminary, but in the rugged schooling of the frontier life; and he spoke a language which the people understood, in words which rang with the realism of intense conviction and the boldness of a man who had a message from God. He gloried in the opportunity of speaking to men who were never seen in church or class meeting—men out of touch with the gospel—aliens from the truth and outcasts from society—infidels, mockers, profligates, ruffians; and he caught them and held them and swept them before him as the wind sweeps the dry leaves in autumn. His own soul kindled with the flame of the message; sinners fell before him like men slain in battle; and the multitudes of believers lifted up their voices in a shout

of victory which could be heard for miles around.

Here is a description of a scene which followed his preaching one Sunday morning: "Just as I was closing up my sermon, and pressing it with all the force I could command, the power of God suddenly was displayed, and sinners fell by scores through all the assembly. We had no need of a mourners' bench. It was supposed that several hundred fell in five minutes; sinners turned pale; some ran into the woods; some tried to get away and fell in the attempt; some shouted aloud for joy." Here is another scene: "Triumphant shouts of glory ascended by hundreds, and many sinners were seen with streaming eyes and even exulting shouts giving glory to Jesus Christ. The vast multitudes fell almost in every direction, and I sat down under a deep sense that God was there. . . . There was no more preaching for that day and the next. The cries of the penitents and shouts of the young converts and old professors went up without intermission day and night. Two hundred professed religion, and one hundred and seventy joined the Methodist Episcopal Church before the close of the camp meeting."

There was need of a cool head and a strong and steady hand to hold the course safely in times of such tremendous excitement. There was danger that the mighty rushing wind of emotion and even the sweeping fire of fanaticism would be counted more significant than the still small voice of God. At times strange physical manifestations and self-delusions and even gross impostures were associated with the genuine fruits of the Spirit. Cartwright gives us a quaint description of a violent affliction known as "the jerks," which at times would sweep through a congregation in a sort of nervous contagion. He says: "A new exercise broke out among us, called 'the jerks,' which was overwhelming in its effects upon the bodies and the minds of the people. No matter whether they were saints or sinners, they would be taken under a warm song or sermon and seized with a convulsive jerking all over, which they could not by any possibility avoid; and the more they resisted the more they jerked. If they would not strive against it and pray in good earnest, the jerking would usually abate. I have seen more than five hundred persons jerking at one time in my large congregations. Most usually

persons taken with the jerks, to obtain relief, as they said, would rise up and dance. Some would run, but could not get away. Some would resist; on such the jerks were usually very severe."

There were those also who professed to have visions of the unseen world. Either in the congregation or in their own homes they would fall in a trance and would lie motionless and without food, sometimes for a whole week. Then they would rise up and claim that they had seen God and talked with spirits and had coming events revealed to them; and would denounce all who opposed these claims as enemies of the truth and children of the devil.

Such scenes could not fail to deeply impress the ignorant and superstitious among the people, while they tended to disparage even genuine religious experience in minds that were wise and sane. But the sturdy common sense of Peter Cartwright enabled him to distinguish between the healthy and the unhealthy, the true and the false; and his fearless leadership saved the converts from many a wild excess and mad delusion. He loved to see an unbeliever changed into what he called "a happy, shouting Christian." He held that God could

ıse even such a strange instrumentality as "the jerks" to bring sinners to repentance and believers into a fuller sense of dependence upon him; but for indulgence in physical excesses, for dreams and visions and revelations and prophecies, he had no place in his creed and no tolerance in his practice. He set himself stoutly against all such teaching, and, in the face of men and women who prophesied that God would strike him dead for his opposition to the truth, he stayed the wavering people and beat back the rising tide of fanaticism.

For the first twenty years of his itinerancy he averaged four hundred sermons a year, so preaching eight thousand sermons in twenty years, and usually riding many miles on horseback from one appointment to another. From camp meeting to camp meeting, from hamlet to hamlet, from cabin to cabin, from soul to soul, meeting his appointments with tireless zeal through summer's heat and winter's cold, preaching now to thousands and now to one man, pushing into the remotest corners and the most hostile neighborhoods, and kindling everywhere the flame of his evangel, this is the message with which he was ever

ready and for which he made no apology: "Behold the Lamb of God."

Coming late in the evening to the gate of a wealthy gentleman, he asks permission to spend the night with him. This being granted, and the family being assembled after the evening meal with several friends who have come to call, he turns the conversation upon religious subjects, and finally proposes that he be allowed to preach. He sings, prays, takes his text, and speaks to them for about an hour, till the whole company, from the genial host to the slaves who have been called in, are in tears. At the close of the sermon the host cries, "Do leave another appointment and come and preach to us, for we are sinners and greatly need preaching."

When he comes to the house on his next visitation he finds it crowded with those who have gathered to hear him. He preaches with great liberty, and presses upon all who are present the duty of an immediate acceptance of Jesus Christ. Soon there are cries for mercy, followed by joyous shouts of salvation. The doors of the church are opened; and some ten persons, including the father, the mother, two children, and two servants of the

family, are received into membership. A gracious revival begins, and soon a strong society is established in the place.

At the close of a camp meeting where he has worked four days and four nights with little rest, and where about thirty have been converted, he has to ride fifteen miles in a wagon with twelve persons who have been seeking light but have not yet found it. At once the wagon is turned into a place of prayer. The woods which fringe the road ring with hymn and shout of praise, and before the journey's end is reached all of the twelve are powerfully converted. That night the whole settlement is called together, and the work goes on with increasing interest, until scores in the little community are brought to an acceptance of Jesus Christ.

At another time he comes worn and penniless to a tavern, and, after frankly stating his inability to pay for his lodging, is invited to stay for the night. When the hour for retiring arrives he asks the host if he has any objection to his praying before they sleep, and is informed that there is no objection whatever. The host retires into the kitchen, seemingly to assemble the family; but soon returns with a candle and bids the

guest follow him. He leads the way to a back chamber and, putting the candle on the table, says, "There, you can pray as much as you please." At first nonplused by this strange treatment, Cartwright quickly recovers himself and determines to make the most of his present situation. He discovers that he is separated from the kitchen by only a thin board partition, so that he can easily be heard in the other room; so he begins to pray with a loud, strong voice. He soon finds that he has an audience, for he hears the landlady say, "He is crazy, and will kill us all this night! Go, husband, and see what is the matter!" Coming reluctantly into the room to remonstrate with his strange guest, the man is drawn into conversation on the subject of religion, and is so impressed with what he hears that when, on the following morning, he bids his guest good-by, he presses him to stop again when he may be passing that way. Less than six months later, when Cartwright comes again, he finds that both the man and his wife are happy Christians, and that they date their turning to God from that strange, memorable night.

Again, we find him coming one Saturday night, as he is returning from the General

Conference, into a wild region of the Cumberland Mountains, where there is no gospel preacher within many miles, and where many of the people have grown up without ever hearing the word of God. Looking in vain for some Christian home where he may spend the Sabbath, he is at last compelled to apply at a fairly respectable-looking tavern, where the landlord informs him he may stay, but says he fears he will not enjoy his quarters, as a company of young people are to gather there that evening for a dance. Undecided, he takes his seat in a quiet corner where he watches the company assembling, and there makes up his mind to spend the Sabbath where he is and seek an opportunity to preach. He says: "I had hardly settled this point in my mind when a beautiful, ruddy young lady walked very gracefully up to me, dropped a handsome curtsy, and pleasantly, with winning smiles, invited me out to take a dance with her. I can hardly describe my thoughts or feelings on that occasion. However, in a moment I resolved on a desperate experiment. I rose as gracefully as I could; I will not say with some emotion, but with many emotions. The young lady moved to my right side;

I grasped her right hand with my right hand, while she leaned her left arm on mine. In this position we walked on the floor. The whole company seemed pleased at this act of politeness in the young lady, shown to a stranger. The colored man, who was the fiddler, began to put his fiddle in the best order. I then spoke to the fiddler to hold a moment, and added that for several years I had not undertaken any matter of importance without first asking the blessing of God upon it, and I desired now to ask the blessing of God upon this beautiful young lady and the whole company that had shown such an act of politeness to a total stranger. Here I grasped the young lady's hand tightly and said, 'Let us all kneel down and pray,' and then instantly dropped on my knees, and commenced praying with all the power of soul and body that I could command. The young lady tried to get loose from me, but I held her tight. Presently she fell on her knees. Some of the company kneeled, some stood, some fled, some sat still, all looked curious. . . . While I prayed some wept, and wept out loud, and some cried for mercy. I rose from my knees and commenced an exhortation, after which I sang

a hymn. The young lady who invited me on the floor lay prostrate, crying earnestly for mercy. I exhorted again, I sang and prayed nearly all night. About fifteen of that company professed religion, and our meeting lasted next day and next night, and as many more were powerfully converted. I organized a society, took thirty-two into the Church, and sent them a preacher. My landlord was appointed leader, which post he held for many years."

Do we wonder at the eccentric rashness of the man, and marvel at the outcome of his efforts? Let us rather admire his discerning boldness. "In some conditions of society I should have failed," he says; "in others I should have been mobbed; in others I should have been considered a lunatic." But in that condition of society—under the conditions actually existing when he made his bold attempt—he won; and he won not by accident, but by the sanctified shrewdness of a man who to a wonderful knowledge of human nature had added implicit obedience to God. Did he not remember that night when, riding homeward from a dance, he himself had been arrested in his wild career as by the outstretched arm of the Almighty, and brought under strong

conviction of sin from which his only escape was a full surrender to Jesus Christ? And did he not know that also for these untutored children of the forest, whose consciences had not been hardened by long resistance to the gospel, it would be but a step from unbridled merriment to sincere repentance, could he but bring them face to face with God? And was not the Holy Spirit, with wisdom swifter than mere human discernment, bidding him act now? With the self-abandon of one willing to be counted a fool for Jesus' sake, he followed the light which was given him, and won. "The actions prompted by those sudden impressions to perform religious duty," he says, commenting upon the strange scenes of that night, "often succeed beyond all human calculation, and thereby inspire a confident belief in an immediate superintending agency of the Divine Spirit of God. In this agency of the Holy Spirit of God I have been a firm believer for more than fifty-four years, and I do firmly believe that if the ministers of the present day had more of the unction or baptismal fire of the Holy Ghost prompting their ministerial efforts, we should succeed much better than we do, and be more successful in win-

ning souls to Christ than we are." And these are not the words of a harebrained zealot who uses his Bible as a book of divination and expects to have God work miracles to save him the toil and sweat of his own efforts—they are the words of a very sane, very brave, very busy toiler in the vineyard of his Master, who has given up all else for the joy of doing his Lord's will, and so has heard him say, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

CHAPTER III

THE MILITANT PREACHER

Probably Peter Cartwright is as widely known for the strength of his right arm as for any of the powers of his mind or spirit. Stories of his fistic encounters, often grossly exaggerated at the start and losing nothing in the handing down, have been heard by thousands who know little or nothing of the heroic devotion and the splendid achievements of his life. It is not fair to judge him by these garbled accounts, or even by isolated facts in the case. We must study such scenes in their historic setting of character and environment.

We cannot deny that there was an element of muscular strenuosity in the ministry of this man. He was indeed, as Dr. John P. Newman said, "a Peter who had an arm of flesh as well as a word of power, and who, at times, believed in a dispensation of muscular Christianity as well as a dispensation of the Holy Ghost." There was in the times in which he lived,

in the spirit of that frontier land, in the very blood which throbbed in his heart, the making of a fighter. His father was a soldier of the Revolution and had bequeathed to his son an indomitable love of liberty and an instinctive hatred of tyranny. He had no tolerance for oppression in any form. His early life was spent amid the grim struggles of Indian warfare and the stern conflicts and swift judgments of men who were laying the foundations of law and order in places which had known the curse of anarchy and the flare of unbridled passion. His brief school days had been tense in the assertion of his rights against reckless bullies, and he had left school to face exposures and hardships which few men could have endured. His years were not passed in quiet ministry to established congregations in orderly communities, but he fought for the right of free speech in the gospel, and wrested his converts from mad persecution, and protected his flocks, often unaided by the law, against enemies as cruel as the lion or the bear.

He never sought a physical encounter, and when one was threatened he tried to avoid it by all means which seemed hon-

orable to him. His sense of humor and his quick wit stood him in good part, and many a time a laugh took the place of the blow which seemed imminent. But he was absolutely fearless, both morally and physically; and when justice seemed to suffer oppression, when his congregation was denied the right to worship God in peace, when the dignity of his own soul was offended by an affront which he felt no freeborn American ought to endure, the strength of his spirit leaped into action; and no man in the wrong was able to stand before him. "It was a part of my creed," he says, "to love everybody, but to fear no one, and I did not permit myself to believe any man could whip me till it was tried." And no man who tried it ever succeeded.

The following scene from his early ministry shows clearly the spirit of the opposition as well as the spirit of this defender of the liberty of the gospel. Speaking of an unusual gathering of the rabble, who, as he was preaching at a camp meeting one Sunday morning, "came drunk, and armed with dirks, clubs, knives, and horsewhips, and swore they would break up the meeting," he says: "About the time I was half through my discourse two very fine-dressed

young men marched into the congregation with loaded whips, and hats on, and rose up and stood in the midst of the ladies, and began to laugh and talk. They were near the stand, and I requested them to desist and get off the seats; but they cursed me and told me to mind my own business, and said they would not get down. I stopped trying to preach, and called for a magistrate. There were two at hand, but I saw they were both afraid. I ordered them to take these men into custody, but they said they could not do it. I told them, as I left the stand, to command me to take them, and I would do it at the risk of my life. I advanced toward them. They ordered me to stand off, but I advanced. One of them made a pass at my head with his whip, but I closed in with him, and jerked him off the seat. A regular scuffle ensued. The congregation by this time were all in commotion. I heard the magistrates give general orders, commanding all friends of order to aid in suppressing the riot. In the scuffle I threw my prisoner down and held him fast; he tried his best to get loose; I told him to be quiet or I would pound his chest well. The mob rose and rushed to the rescue of the two prisoners, for they

had taken the other young man also. An old and drunken magistrate came up to me and ordered me to let my prisoner go. I told him I should not. He swore if I did not he would knock me down. I told him to crack away. Then one of my friends, at my request, took hold of my prisoner, and the drunken justice made a pass at me; but I parried the stroke, and seized him by the collar and the hair of the head, and fetching him a sudden jerk forward brought him to the ground and jumped on him. I told him to be quiet or I would pound him well. The mob then rushed to the scene; they knocked down seven magistrates, and several preachers and others. I gave up my drunken prisoner to another, and threw myself in front of the friends of order. Just at this moment the ringleader of the mob and I met; he made three passes at me, intending to knock me down. The last time he struck at me, by the force of his own effort he threw the side of his face toward me. It seemed at that moment I had not power to resist temptation, and I struck a sudden blow in the burr of the ear and dropped him to the earth. Just at that moment the friends of order rushed by hundreds on the mob, knocking

them down in every direction. In a few minutes the place became too strait for the mob, and they wheeled and fled in every direction, but we secured about thirty prisoners."

Naturally such a scene on the Sabbath day filled the camp with confusion and depression, and none of the other preachers felt adequate for the occasion. But Peter Cartwright said to the elder, "I feel a clear conscience, for under the necessity of the circumstances we have done right, and now I ask to let me preach." This request was readily granted. The trumpet was sounded, and he mounted the stand and gave out, in clear and ringing tones, the following text: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He says: "In about thirty minutes the power of God fell on the congregation in such a manner as is seldom seen. The people fell in every direction, right and left, front and rear. It was supposed that not less than three hundred fell like dead men in mighty battle; and there was no need of calling mourners, for they were strewed all over the campground. . . . Our meeting lasted all night, and Monday, and Monday night; and when we closed on Tuesday, there were two hundred

who had professed religion, and about that number joined the Church."

Again we hear of a camp meeting which he conducted "in the edge of Tennessee," about the year 1824, "where," he says, "some tall sons and daughters of Belial were brought down to cry for mercy." The conversion of these prominent persons stirred up unusually fierce persecution, till finally the rough element of the men organized themselves into a sort of military company and, arming themselves with clubs, vowed that they would ride their horses through the encampment, knock down all who dared to oppose them, and break up the meeting.

The time fixed for the execution of this plan was Saturday afternoon; but meantime warning had been brought to the camp and preparation had been made to give the invaders a warm reception. As they came on at a gallop, their courage braced by a free use of whisky and their doughty captain riding at their head, Peter Cartwright sprang into the gap between two tents where they must enter the inclosure and commanded them to halt. Their leader ordered him to stand aside or he would knock him down. He says: "I cried, 'Crack

away!' He spurred his horse and made a pass at me, sure enough; but, fortunately, I dodged his blow. The next lick was mine, and I gave it to him, and laid him flat on his back, his foot being in the stirrup. His horse got my next stroke, which wheeled him 'right about'; he dragged his rider a few steps and dropped him, and then gave this redoubtable captain leg bail at a mighty rate. The balance of the mounted rowdies, seeing their leader down and kicking, wheeled and ingloriously fled. We took care of the captain, of course, and fined him fifty dollars. This gave us entire control of the encampment, and peace in all our borders during our meeting." Such were the battles for freedom of worship in those pioneer days, and such was the man who led the fight in the name of the Lord God of hosts.

He was a plain and bold speaker, and did not spare those who seemed to deserve rebuke, whether in private conversation or in the public assembly. At times his words were keen as whip lashes, cutting deep into the most callous offenders and bringing them into ridicule and contempt. About the year 1813, while he was living in Logan County, Kentucky, there rode up to his

door one evening and asked to be kept for the night two men, the elder stating that he was a Baptist preacher and that he had with him his invalid son whom he was bringing home from Missouri. They were bidden to dismount, their horses were cared for, and they themselves were welcomed to the evening meal. After supper they left the room for a little, and when they returned their breath had on it the odor of whisky. At bedtime the father refused to lead in prayer or to take any part in the family worship, and the next morning he brought out his whisky bottle and offered a dram to his host. As he was about to start on his journey he said, "Perhaps, brother, you charge?" "Yes," said Peter Cartwright, "all whisky-drinking preachers, that will not pray with me, I charge." "Well," said the guest, "it looks a little hard that one preacher should charge another." "Sir," answered Cartwright, "you have given me no evidence that you are a preacher, and I fear you are a vile impostor; and when any man about me drinks whisky, and will not pray with me, preacher or no preacher, I take a pleasure in charging him full price. So haul out your cash."

More than once he was challenged to fight a duel by men who were smarting under his sharp rebuke, and some droll incidents are related of expedients which he adopted to relieve himself from such embarrassing situations. It was the custom in those days for the men to sit on one side in the public meeting and the women on the other; and frequently young roisterers would show their contempt for social usage and for the worship of God by forcing themselves into the seats set apart for the women and making a disturbance there. At one time a showily-dressed fellow, resplendent in full-ruffled shirt bosom, took his place among the women, and even stood upon the seats and persisted in standing there. After several general remarks on the subject of good order had failed to bring him to time the following personal thrust was directed at him: "I mean that young man there, standing on the seats of the ladies, with a ruffled shirt on—I doubt not that ruffled shirt was borrowed." This blow pierced his armor and brought him down and out in a hurry, swearing that he would whip the preacher before he left the ground. Taking as a challenge this threat, which had been widely circulated,

Cartwright walked up to the fellow and proposed that if they were to fight they should have it out alone in the woods and not disturb the camp. As they started together for the woods Cartwright leaped the fence which encircled the camp and was seized with a sudden pain in his left side. As he put up his hand to his side his challenger thought he was drawing a dirk, and charged him with it. Cartwright says, "Quick as thought it occurred to me how to get clear of a whipping." "Yes," and I will give you the benefit of all the dirks I have," he said; and advanced rapidly toward him. As Cartwright came on, the other turned and fled; and so the fight was averted. As to the question what would have happened had his antagonist not been frightened away, but gone on with him into the woods, he says, "This is hard to answer. I should no doubt have proposed to him to have prayer first, and then followed the openings of Providence."

On another occasion, being challenged to mortal combat by a crusty old major whose son had been rebuked for disturbing a meeting, he claimed the right, according to the code, to choose the weapon which

should be used. This being acceded, he proposed that they retire to the neighboring field and fight it out with cornstalks. So with quick wit and humor and badinage he staved off many a fray.

But there was a line of endurance beyond which no man must push him. He admitted more than once that he was subject to temptation to answer blow with blow when his blood was stirred and mounted hot to his brain. "Don't you attempt to strike me," he said to a blustering fellow, "for if you do, and the devil gets out of you into me, I shall give you the worst whipping you ever got in all your life." And though the words were spoken partly in jest, there was a grim element of truth about them which one would do well to remember. For there were times in his life when the great deeps of his soul were so moved with indignation that the very "leadings of Providence" seemed to indicate a thrashing for the offender.

Once when he was a candidate for office in Sangamon County, Illinois, a man who was a total stranger to him invented the story that years ago he had known Cartwright—in fact, had been his neighbor

down in Kentucky, and there had heard him "offer to swear off a plain note of indebtedness." The story was told in a large meeting at Springfield, and was being freely circulated through the county, and it seemed to promise defeat for Cartwright unless it could be completely disproved. To the anxious solicitation of his friends he answered, "Gentlemen, if you will take me to and show me this man I will give you a clear demonstration that his statements are false." At that very time the defamer was speaking in the public square, and when Cartwright walked up to him the following ensued, as told by himself:

"Looking him in the eye, said I, 'Well, sir, I want to know something about this lying report you have been circulating about me.' There was a large crowd gathered around.

"'Who are you, sir?' said he. 'I don't know you.'

"'Did you ever see me before?'

"'No, sir, not that I know of.'

"'Well, sir, my name is Peter Cartwright, about whom you have circulated the lying statement that I, in your presence, in Kentucky, offered to swear off a plain note of my indebtedness; and I have proved

to this large and respectable company that you are a lying, dirty scoundrel; and now, if you do not here acknowledge yourself a liar and a dirty fellow, I will sweep the streets with you to your heart's content; and do it instantly, or I will give you a chastisement that you will remember to your latest day.'"

There was but one thing to do, and no time must be lost. There was an awful strength of purpose in the words, and an awful light flashing from those deep grey eyes.

"Well, gentlemen," said the defamer, "I acknowledge that I have done Mr. Cartwright great injustice, and have, without any just cause, lied on him."

"Well may we pray," says Peter Cartwright in commenting upon this scene, "well may we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"

It was also in connection with his candidacy for the Legislature that another scene occurred which has been exaggerated into a most grotesque story. As he was out one day on an "electioneering" trip, and had occasion to cross the Sangamon River, he rode toward the ferry and came suddenly upon a group of men. One of them was

just declaring that Peter Cartwright, like all other Methodist preachers, was a rascal and a horse thief, that it was a disgrace to Sangamon County to have such a man as a candidate for the Legislature, and that he proposed to thrash him whenever he laid eyes on him. Not wishing to get into trouble, Cartwright looked for a way to pass unobserved around the group; but finding that this was impossible he rode boldly up and said, "Gentlemen, who is it among you that is going to whip Peter Cartwright the first time you see him?" "I am the lark that's going to thrash him well," the man replied; but when Cartwright gave his name and said that, if the stranger proposed to whip him, he had no objection to having him try it at once, the fellow cooled down for a time and claimed not to believe that the newcomer was actually Peter Cartwright. Later, however, when they were all on the boat, he opened up again with a new volley of curses. Then, says Peter Cartwright, "I said to a gentleman on the boat, 'Here, hold my horse'; and stepping up to this cursing disciple I said sternly to him, 'Now, sir, you have to whip me as you threatened, or quit cursing me, or I will put you in the river and bap-

tize you in the name of the devil, for surely you belong to him.' "

That he actually carried out the threat to baptize him in the name of the devil, that he held him under the water till he was ready to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and then put him through that sacrilegious performance, that he compelled him to promise that he would recite the prayer every morning and would go to hear every Methodist itinerant that preached within five miles of him—these statements seem to be the untrustworthy accretions of the years. For he himself tells us that the threat alone settled the man; and that he was so profoundly impressed by the speech and the speaker that he voted for Cartwright at the next election and became his admiring friend.

Some of the most trying struggles of Peter Cartwright's ministry were with strong-minded and able-bodied women; for if even a woman so far transgressed the laws of modesty and decency as to persist in disturbing a meeting or in interrupting family worship, this man, who was usually so courteous and chivalrous in his treatment of women, did not shrink from a final resort to force.

There lived within the bounds of the Sangamon District, of which at that time Peter Cartwright was presiding elder, a worthy local preacher, better known for piety than for physical prowess; and this good man had a wife who was a noted virago. She opposed her husband in his preaching, would not allow him to ask a blessing at his meals or to conduct family worship, and if he persisted in his effort to pray she would run noisily about the room and overturn the chairs, and had even been known to throw the cat at him while he was on his knees. This sort of thing went on not only when the family were alone; but even when other preachers had been brought in to spend the night, this gentle female exhibited herself, interspersing her antics with cursings and abuse. Though Peter Cartwright had often been invited to share the joys of this home, he had always discreetly declined the invitation, until one evening, out of sympathy for the good man, he yielded and went. When supper was over the husband said kindly, "Come, wife, stop your little affairs, and let us have prayers." To which she replied, "I will have none of your praying about me"; and when the guest mildly expostulated she

curned with cursings upon him. Whereupon he made answer, "Madam, if you were a wife of mine I would break you of your bad ways, or I would break your neck." Thereupon things went from bad to worse, till Peter Cartwright rose up and declared that if she did not stop her noise and allow the worship to proceed he would put her out of doors; which, as she still persisted, he proceeded to do. He says: "I caught her by the arm, and swinging her round in a circle brought her right up to the door and shoved her out. She jumped up, tore her hair, foamed; and such swearing as she uttered was seldom equaled, and never surpassed. The door, or shutter of the door, was very strongly made to keep out hostile Indians. I shut it tight, barred it, and went to prayer, and I prayed as best I could, but I have no language at my command to describe my feelings; at the same time, I was determined to conquer or die in the attempt. While she was raging and foaming in the yard and around the cabin, I started a spiritual song, and sung loud, to drown her voice as much as possible. . . . I sang on, and she roared and thundered outside, till she became perfectly exhausted, and panted for breath. At length,

when she had spent her force, she became calm and still, and then knocked at the door, saying, 'Mr. Cartwright, please let me in.'

" 'Will you behave yourself if I let you in?' said I.

" 'O, yes,' said she, 'I will'; and throwing myself on my guard, and perfectly self-possessed, I opened the door, took her by the hand, led her in, and seated her by the fireplace. She had roared and foamed until she was in a high perspiration, and looked as pale as death. After she took her seat, 'O,' said she, 'what a fool I am!' "

The battle was over. For the remainder of the evening she sat meek and quiet, and within six months she was soundly converted, and became an exemplary wife and mother, and an earnest worker for Christ. And it is a remarkable fact that many other persons whom Peter Cartwright saw fit to rebuke sternly, or even to oppose with physical force, were shortly afterward converted. For such was the moral earnestness of the man, and such his manifest purpose to do the will of God for the salvation of souls, that those who opposed him and went down before him felt that they had been fighting not only against Peter Cartwright,

but also against the Lord whom he was serving. So in their humiliation it was revealed to them that their humbling at the hands of this man was sent as a punishment for their sins, and a warning to flee from the wrath to come; and they hastened to make their peace, not with man, but with Almighty God.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

WITHIN the bounds of the Goose Creek Circuit, a part of the district over which Peter Cartwright had been appointed presiding elder, there lived a Baptist preacher who was noted for his zeal in defending immersion as the only form of Christian baptism, and in opposing what he spoke of contemptuously as "baby sprinkling." This same Baptist preacher was a thorn in the flesh of the Methodists because he unsettled many believers in the faith as committed unto them, and even succeeded in leading some of their converts over into the Baptist fold. But there was a certain "fine little widow woman," as Peter Cartwright characterizes her, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who was not only proof against all the wiles of this proselyting preacher, but even devised a plan for his discomfiture. She went to him and told him that if he would come to the Poplar Grove camp meeting the following Sunday morning, and there would patiently listen

co a sermon on "Baptism," to be preached by the presiding elder, she would give him an entire suit of new clothes. He agreed to submit to the test, and promised to be present on Sunday morning, ready to win the suit of clothes. "When I got to the camp ground," says Peter Cartwright, "my little spunky Methodist widow was tented on the ground. She came and invited me to her tent, and then told me the proposition she had made to Mr. W., the Baptist preacher. 'And now,' said she, 'do your best. If he runs, the suit of clothes is yours; and if he stands his ground, and you do your very best, you shall have as good a suit anyhow.'"

When the hour for the sermon arrived it was estimated that ten thousand people had gathered at the campground, and with them had come the Baptist preacher. He was to have the privilege of answering at the close of the sermon, should he feel so disposed.

The plan of the sermon was as follows:

"First. The design and intent of water baptism.

"Second. Who are the divinely appointed administrators of water baptism?

"Third. The proper mode of water baptism.

"Fourth. Who are the qualified subjects of baptism?"

The Baptist preacher sat within the altar rail, surrounded by twenty Methodist preachers who had come in from all parts of the district, and listened with no great discomfort till the fourth division of the sermon had been reached. At that point the Baptist position was fiercely assaulted, and finally was carried by storm.

"Is not that Church which has no children in it more like hell than heaven?" said the preacher. "If all hell was searched, there would not be a single child found in it; but all children are in heaven. Therefore, there being no children in the Baptist Church, it is more like hell than heaven."

Says Peter Cartwright:

"The Baptist preacher here rose to his feet and started. I called out to him to stop and hear me out; but he replied that he could not stand it, and kept on and cleared the ground; so he lost his suit of clothes and I gained one. But what was much better than all this, I was listened to for three hours; and the attention of

the multitude seemed not to falter, but they heard me with profound interest, and it was the opinion of hundreds that this discussion did a vast amount of good."

Those were not days of broad interdenominational fellowship, but of zealotry narrowed by ignorance and of bigotry fostered by isolation. Many of the preachers were unlettered men of straitened mental vision, who knew little of the progress of the kingdom of God save as they had seen it in their own flocks or had heard of it in their own sect; and with intense devotion to the teachings of their own Church they guarded with jealous care its doctrine and its polity. And the flocks needed careful shepherding. Books were very scarce, and many of the people did no reading, and so were dependent upon the infrequent visits of the preacher not only for theological training but even for intellectual suggestion and stimulus. Their minds were fallow ground in which both the tares and the wheat found ready lodgment and made luxuriant growth. A single sermon might swing scores away from their old moorings; and wildfire, suddenly springing up, might sweep through a community like swift flames on the prairie.

Liberty of thought in such untutored minds quickly degenerated into license and folly. The great sociological problems which absorb so much of thought and effort in the Church of to-day, and are more and more compelling all Christians to stand shoulder to shoulder in concerted effort for the salvation of society, were unknown in those pioneer days. Differences of doctrine still held the place of emphasis, which now they have yielded to unity of effort and of life. "Although I have lived long and studied hard," says Peter Cartwright, "I have never to this day found out what a Baptist means by a union meeting." And as we look into the records of his own life and see how ready he was to "open the doors of the church," not only to Universalists and Unitarians, but also to Baptists and Presbyterians whom he had succeeded in bringing over to the Methodist position, we cannot help wondering what was his own conception of a union meeting, and whether his views on this question may not have caused some perplexity for those very Baptists who were such an enigma to him.

In the year 1804, while traveling the Waynesville Circuit, before his entrance into the Western Conference, he engaged

in a theological controversy which resulted in a complete victory for him and in the establishment of a new Methodist society. "Although in my nineteenth year," he says, "I was nearly beardless, and cut two of my back-jaw teeth this year. Hence they called me the boy preacher, and a great many flocked out to hear the boy." Within his circuit, which was so large that four weeks were required to travel once around it, was a place known as Stockton Valley, where was located a log meetinghouse owned by the Baptists and formerly the center of a flourishing Baptist society, but at that time practically abandoned. Upon being invited to preach a funeral sermon in the old church one Sunday morning, Cartwright delivered his message with such earnestness and power that the congregation were mightily moved and some were brought under conviction of sin. In response to an urgent request he preached again that night, and continued the work for some days, until twenty-three persons were converted; and he left them with the promise that upon his return he would explain to them the doctrines and rules of Methodism, and would receive those who so desired into the fellowship of the Church.

But he had hardly gone when three Baptist preachers, hearing of the things which were being done in their old field, came on the scene, "and they all," says Cartwright, "opened with the cry of 'Water, water! You must follow your Lord down into the water!'" He says: "The few scattered Methodists in the neighborhood took the alarm, for fear these preachers would run my converts into the water before I would come round, and they dispatched an old exhorter after me, saying I must come immediately, or my converts would all be ducked."

So back he hurried to join in what had been announced as a "union meeting," but proved to be an effort in which Baptists only were invited to take part. For two days this work went on, and then all who had "experienced religion" were invited to come forward and give their experience, and receive the right hand of fellowship, preparatory to immersion and entrance into the Baptist Church. In all twenty-five persons responded to this invitation, and twenty-three of these declared that they had found Christ recently through the preaching of Peter Cartwright. "Their experiences," he says, "were pronounced

good, and the right hand of fellowship was freely given, and there was great joy in the camp, but it was death in the pot to me. I thought I could not bear up under it. I was sitting thinking what I would do. I am bereft of my children, and what have I left?"

To the great chagrin of the Methodists who were present and to the joy of the Baptists, Peter Cartwright was seen to rise and follow his converts to the front of the room. There he gave his experience, received the right hand of fellowship, and was directed to present himself at the river bank, with the other candidates for immersion, at nine the following morning. And at nine o'clock he was there; but it was noticed that he did not, like the others, carry a change of clothing for baptism. After singing and prayer and exhortation, when the time had come for the immersion, Cartwright stepped forward and said: "I wish to join the Baptist Church, if I can come in with a good conscience. I have been baptized, and my conscience is perfectly satisfied with it, and I cannot submit to be re-baptized. Can I come into your Church on these terms?"

Upon being questioned as to the mode

of his baptism he said that it had been by sprinkling, and proceeded to argue in favor of its validity; but he was informed that sprinkling was no baptism at all, and therefore did not fit him for entrance into the Church. Finally he was ordered to stand aside and make room for more worthy candidates. But the discussion had made such an impression upon the twenty-three persons who had been converted under Cartwright's preaching, that, one by one, they refused to be immersed, declaring that if the one who had led them to Christ was thought unfit for membership in the Church they did not care for its fellowship. So only two of all the candidates were baptized; and then the congregation were invited to the church to join in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Three sermons were preached in which Cartwright was strongly denounced as one who would neither enter the kingdom himself nor allow others to go in; and then they passed the bread and the wine. But Cartwright and his converts, who had seated themselves among the communicants, were omitted in the distribution; whereupon Cartwright rose and asked that they be granted the privilege of communing.

"My brethren," said he, "you, after hearing our experience, pronounced us Christians, and you say a Christian never can be lost; and our Saviour pronounced a solemn woe on those that offend one of his little ones. Now, do, therefore, give us the bread and wine!"

When this appeal met with only a sharp rebuke, the sympathies of the congregation were so strongly enlisted for Cartwright and his party that many of them cried out, "Shame! Shame!" Cartwright then asked that he be allowed to explain his position; and when this was denied, he sprang upon a bench and invited the congregation to meet him just outside the church and hear his defense. He says: "The people flocked out; I mounted an old log, and the crowd gathered around me. I showed them the inconsistency of the Baptist preachers, and laid it to them as well as my inexperience would permit; and closed by saying that, as I and my children in the gospel could not, in any consistent way, be admitted into the Baptist church, I was now determined to organize a Methodist church. I explained our rules, and invited all that were willing to join us to come forward and give me their hands and names. Twenty-seven

came forward, all of my twenty-three young converts and four others; and before the year ended we took into the church there seventy-seven members, but my Baptist friends blowed almost entirely out."

But a preacher in those days felt called to defend his doctrinal position against all comers, or to open the attack upon any other camp; so we do not find Peter Cartwright confining his attention to the Baptists, but wielding the sword of Methodism against the various other denominations. He gives us an amusing account of his debate with a certain learned graduate of the schools, who, in order to show his contempt for an ignorant Methodist who had received no regular theological training, addressed him in Greek, to the wonder and admiration of the crowd. Cartwright listened with marked attention, as if understanding it all; and then rose and answered in German, of which he had gained some knowledge in his younger days. His opponent, supposing that he was speaking in Hebrew, was so profoundly impressed that he gave up the fight, declaring Cartwright to be the first learned Methodist that he had ever encountered. "I do not wish to undervalue education," says Peter Cartwright,

"but really I have seen so many of these educated preachers who forcibly reminded me of lettuce growing under the shade of a peach tree, or a gosling that had got the straddles by wading in the dew, that I turn away sick and faint."

The truth, as he had received it, was to him of such transcendent importance that it must be proclaimed with a boldness that brooked no restraint of time or place; and so he did not hesitate to enter the pulpit of another denomination and there assail its theological teachings. To this ardent advocate of free grace, Calvinism was an enemy that must be struck down wherever it showed its head. What had he to do with ministerial courtesy or denominational etiquette which denied his right—his call—to attack this slayer of the souls of men? As one commissioned of God to cry aloud and spare not, he lifted up his voice and denounced the doctrine, even in the hous of its friends.

It was very early in his ministry, about the year 1806, that his zeal in opposing Calvinism and defending the Arminian system involved him in his most noted theological controversy. In reply to several pamphlets which had been written by Presby-

terian clergymen, there appeared certain other pamphlets, which were anonymous, strongly satirizing Calvinism. And as Peter Cartwright had these anonymous satires republished, and "threw them broadcast over Kentucky," as he expresses it, the credit for their authorship was given to him. Whereupon "three Calvinistic clergymen" issued another anonymous document, purporting to be a letter from hell, complimenting Cartwright upon the work he was doing as an ally of the hosts of hell, in spreading the false doctrine of Arminius and assailing the truth as taught by John Calvin. The letter contained speeches supposed to have been delivered in the council of the infernal regions by Diabolus, Apollyon, and Lucifer, giving their reasons for approving the Arminian system of theology as well qualified to fill hell with the damned, and urging that all encouragement should be given to Peter Cartwright as a worthy advocate of that system.

When this document came into the hands of Cartwright he proceeded to prepare, with great care, and to issue over his own signature, a most scathing reply, in which he pays his respects to the anonymous

writers of the letter, to the theology which they represent, and to John Calvin himself. "If I am to answer a fool according to his folly," he says, "permit me to answer a devil according to his malice; therefore expect plain language." And plain language certainly follows. "Are you not afraid, sir," he says, "that men will take you at your word and believe you to be a devil? And, what is more to be dreaded, are you not fearful that God will take you at your word and make you a devil? 'Fools make a mock at sin,' and it is not becoming professing Christians to mock at or sport about hell. But I forgot; you believe in the unconditional perseverance of the saints, and the absolute unconditional imputation of the righteousness of Christ; therefore your blasphemies, profaneness, and lying are covered."

The main line of the argument, which develops a rebuttal of the attack upon Arminianism and a counter attack upon Calvinism, is as follows:

I. Reasons for doubting that the letter was composed in hell:

(a) The devil, who was familiar with the old Romans, would certainly show a greater knowledge of

Latin than is manifest in the letter.

(b) The author is evidently unfamiliar with the constitution of the hierarchy of hell.

(c) There is more truth in the document than could easily be put to the credit of the devil.

II. Reasons why one might be inclined to believe that the letter was written in hell:

(a) It is filled with lies.

(b) It contains many devilish half-truths.

This plan gives Cartwright ample opportunity to take up each weapon of attack and hurl it back against the enemy; which he proceeds to do with a vigor of language and a vehemence of sentiment which leave nothing further to be desired.

After completing his main argument, he takes up for special treatment the doctrine of the unconditional perseverance of the saints, and follows this with twelve reasons why Calvinism should be popular in hell. His final paragraph is the following:

"I now close by saying, if any friends of his Satanic Majesty think that anything I have said is not correct, and if they feel any disposition to set me right, they are at

perfect liberty to do so, provided they will sign their proper names; and thus, perhaps, they may once more hear from a friend to equal rights. PETER CARTWRIGHT."

If the reverend gentlemen who had personated Satan in attacking Peter Cartwright and his theology ever came out into the open and renewed the battle under their own colors, there is no record of the fact. They seem never to have claimed for themselves the credit which they had given to the devil.

CHAPTER V

THE UNIQUE PERSONALITY

PERHAPS the most interesting portraiture of Peter Cartwright is that given us by Dr. Frederick J. Jobson, fraternal delegate from the British Wesleyan Conference to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church which met at Indianapolis in 1856. In his book entitled "America and American Methodism," Dr. Jobson selects Cartwright as one of three very remarkable men whom he saw and heard at that General Conference, and describes his appearance as follows: "His mouth and eyes, as well as the radiant play of the upper part of his cheeks, tell of a kindly and sociable nature. His head is large, and firmly supported between ample and compact shoulders. His brow is broad, and overhung with a mass of iron-gray hair. His eyes are intensely deep in color, and shine like dark fires beneath his shaggy eyebrows, while crow's-feet wrinkles mark their corners, and add to the peculiar expression of his countenance. His com-

plexion, never fair, is deeply tanned by the sun."

Dr. Abel Stevens gives us an interesting account of meeting his old friend Peter Cartwright during the session of the General Conference held in Boston in 1852: "As we were stepping from the door of the Bromfield Street Church soon after the commencement of the present session of the General Conference, we were clutched in the brawny but trembling arms of a strong, rough-looking character — apparently a backwoodsman. A large crowd stood round, and all eyes were turned upon us. 'God bless you,' exclaimed the hearty old man, with a voice strong but trembling as if cracked by hard usage in the exposures of Western travel. 'God bless you, you dear little rascal, how do you do?' And loosing his bearlike but really loving grasp, and turning to the crowd, he again exclaimed, 'I saved the little rascal's scalp at Pittsburg in '48.' The allusion was to the brief struggle we passed through at that session on the subject of slavery, with which our readers are perhaps still familiar."

It was during this same session of the General Conference that Peter Cartwright had an experience in preaching to the

people of Boston of which he gives us an amusing description in his autobiography. Having an appointment to fill the pulpit of one of the leading churches, and being sure that a congregation in such a church and such a city would expect the very best, he prepared himself with unusual care, and came before the people on Sunday morning with what he regarded as one of his finest sermons. But, though he put on all the gravity that he could command, and felt at the close, as he expresses it, that "he had been going nearly at the top of his speed," he was greatly mortified to learn that his audience had been disappointed and could hardly believe that the preacher was actually Peter Cartwright, the Western pioneer, of whom they had heard so much. "I tell you," he says, "this was cold encouragement. I hastened to my room and prayed over it a while." On the evening of the same Sunday he made another attempt, facing a congregation in which were gathered many of the leading laymen of Boston and some of its eminent preachers; but when he came down from the pulpit he was again greeted by looks, and even words, which informed him that he had not met the expectations of his hearers. He was greatly

depressed, and had almost made up his mind that he would not try again to preach in Boston, when he was encouraged to make one last effort by the hearty invitation of another prominent pastor, who said, "You must preach to us at Bethel; and roll up your sleeves, and give us a real Western cut."

He tells us that he had already come to the conclusion that he had failed hitherto because, while the people had been looking for something unusual in his preaching, he had been especially careful to hold himself in check and be as much as possible like other men. He says: "Almost all those curious incidents that had gained currency throughout the country concerning Methodist preachers had been located on me, and when the congregation came to hear me they expected little else but a bundle of eccentricities and singularities; and when they did not realize according to their anticipations they were disappointed." So this time, taking one of his favorite texts, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," he began his sermon with a number of anecdotes from his own experience; and swinging in with the naturalness and freedom of a Western

camp meeting he carried all before him, and won the approbation of his cultured hearers.

No doubt there is much of humor and considerable exaggeration about this account; but there is also no doubt that it contains an element of fact which throws much light upon our study of this man and his work. That Peter Cartwright was a man of extraordinary ability, that there was in him a masterful energy of thought and purpose which was bound to assert itself in leadership, cannot be denied. But for all that, seldom has the influence of an unusual personality been used to such advantage, seldom have the peculiarities and oddities which differentiate a man from his fellows counted for so much, as in his sayings and doings. Peter Cartwright trying to preach as other men do—Peter Cartwright seeking to fit himself to the forms and modes of conventional action—would never have been what Dr. Abel Stevens has pronounced him, "one of the most noted, most interesting, most inexplicable men of the West and of Methodism."

He justly resented the imputation of being "a bundle of eccentricities and singularities." He was too honest and too

earnest to be in any sense a charlatan. Yet a large element of his power lay in the fact that he was constantly surprising, frequently startling his hearers. His thought and his language had a coloring all his own, and so could not fail to be original; and his habitual contempt for the conventional, wherever it tended to cramp and suppress genuine life and action, freed him from many a limitation of the ordinary man. But even with this quaint naturalness there was united the skill of a consummate strategist. He studied men and studied situations; and with swift and keen intuition he saw the weakness of positions, and with startling suddenness he broke in upon them by new ways, overwhelming opposition. Careless of refinements which he could not reconcile with strength, utterly fearless when souls were in the balance, wielding with almost reckless daring the weapon which he thought would win, he, like Paul, was willing to become "all things to all men," that he might "by all means save some." Many a means which he used with success would have brought failure and contempt to other men. There has been but one Peter Cartwright.

In the fall of 1818 the Tennessee Con-

ference met at Nashville; and, as is customary at such times, the noted preachers of the Conference were expected to supply the various pulpits of the town. When the plan of appointments was given out, it was noticed that Cartwright and Axley and some of the other plain speakers had not been given a prominent place; because, as Cartwright inferred, there was a fear that in their preaching they might say some things which would offend the wealthy members of the congregations. However, Peter Cartwright was invited by Dr. Blackburn, one of the prominent Presbyterian pastors of Nashville, to preach in his church on Monday evening; and there a great throng gathered to hear him. In the pulpit with the speaker sat "Brother Mac," the pastor of the church which was entertaining the Conference and chairman of the Committee for the Assignment of Preachers, who had been so good as to warn Cartwright that he must conduct himself with all propriety in Dr. Blackburn's church. The text of the evening was, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "After reading my text," says Cartwright, "I paused. At that moment I saw General

Jackson walking up the aisle. He came to the middle post, and very gracefully leaned against it, and stood, as there were no vacant seats. Just then I felt some one pull my coat in the stand, and turning my head, my fastidious preacher, whispering a little loud, said, 'General Jackson has come in; General Jackson has come in!' I felt a flash of indignation run all over me like an electric shock, and facing about to my congregation, and purposely speaking out audibly, I said, 'Who is General Jackson? If he don't get his soul converted, God will damn his soul as quick as he will a Guinea negro.' The preacher tucked his head down and squatted low, and would, no doubt, have been thankful for leave of absence. The congregation, General Jackson and all, smiled, or laughed right out, all at the preacher's expense."

The "city-stationed" preacher was greatly chagrined at this strange outbreak, and at the close of the service informed Peter Cartwright that General Jackson would surely flog him for his impudence; and the next morning he hurried to call on the general to apologize for the insult. But when Cartwright and General Jackson met on the sidewalk, a little while afterward, the

General said: "Mr. Cartwright, you are a man after my own heart. I am very much surprised at Mr. Mac, to think he could suppose that I would be offended at you. No, sir, I told him that I highly approved of your independence; that a minister of Jesus Christ ought to love everybody, and fear no mortal man. I told Mr. Mac that if I had a few thousand such independent, fearless officers as you were, and a well-drilled army, I could take old England." Upon which Peter Cartwright makes comment: "General Jackson was certainly a very extraordinary man."

A scene which occurred while he was presiding elder of the Sangamon District in the Illinois Conference not only gives us an illustration of the surprising methods employed by him for the rebuke of sin, but also affords us a startling revelation of the wanton recklessness of those times. Returning one day from a visit to Springfield, he overtook a party consisting of two young men and a young woman, who were riding in a covered wagon behind an excellent span of horses. As he came up to them they began to sing with strong voices one of the familiar camp-meeting songs, and the young woman began to shout, "Glory

to God! Glory to God!" and one of the young men responded, "Amen! Glory to God!" Thinking at first that they had been attending the camp meeting which was then in session beyond the Sangamon River, and were rejoicing together in their new experience of salvation, he was on the point of riding up and joining them in their gladness, when he discovered by their furtive glances and their flippant manner that they were not in earnest, but were performing a horrid play, a ghastly caricature of religion, for the purpose of mocking and annoying him. First one would fall prostrate, and the other two would cry, "Glory to God! another sinner's down," and would begin to exhort him, saying, "Pray on, brother; pray on, brother; you will soon get religion." Then he would spring up shouting, "God has blessed my soul! Hallelujah, hallelujah! Glory to God!" and another would take his place on the bottom of the wagon, and the whole abominable performance would be repeated.

Filled with indignation, Cartwright was now tempted to ride up and thrash the two young miscreants; but upon second thought he determined to rein in his horse and allow them to go on. He found, however, that

when he held back they also went slowly, and when he quickened his pace they whipped up their horses and kept ahead; so he was compelled to stay near them and be tormented by their sacrilege. At last he turned into a bridle path which made a detour around a slough in the road, thinking that while they were driving carefully through the mud he would leave them behind; but again they put the whip to their horses, and, in their eagerness to keep ahead of him, drove right upon a stump which was sticking up at the point where the mud was the deepest. "The fore wheel of the wagon," he says, "struck centrally on the stump, and as the wheel mounted the stump, over went the wagon. Fearing it would turn entirely over and catch them under, the two young men took a leap into the mud, and when they lighted they sunk up to the middle. The young lady was dressed in white, and as the wagon went over she sprang as far as she could, and lighted on all fours; her hands sunk into the mud up to her armpits, her mouth and the whole of her face immersed in the muddy water, and she certainly would have strangled if the young men had not relieved her. As they helped her up and out, I had

wheeled my horse to see the fun. I rode up to the edge of the mud, stopped my horse, reared in my stirrups, and shouted at the top of my voice, 'Glory to God! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Another sinner's down! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Glory! Hallelujah!' . . . When I became tired of shouting over them, I said, 'Now, you poor, dirty, mean sinners, take this as a just judgment of God upon you for your meanness, and repent of your dreadful wickedness; and let this be the last time that you attempt to insult a preacher; for if you repeat your abominable sport and persecutions, the next time God will serve you worse, and the devil will get you!' "

This remarkable discourse seems to have made a deep impression upon the discomfited enemy; for at the time they were unable to answer a word, and soon afterward were converted under Peter Cartwright's own ministry, were received into the Methodist Church, and went back to their home in Ohio rejoicing in the faith which they had so lately despised.

As Peter Cartwright was not averse to the use of force for the discomfiture of sinners, so he is known, on one occasion at least, to have employed it for the advance-

ment of the saints. In his early ministry, while he was yet known as "the Kentucky boy," and was traveling a circuit on the Ohio River, he had an appointment at a place called Belpre, which he speaks of as "a Yankee village with a Congregational minister." Now, these same Yankees, with their formal worship and their undemonstrative ways, were a great trial to this shouting-happy young itinerant; and though he preached to them again and again, he had no liberty in speaking and little fruit of his labors. After leaving them he used to feel like a bird escaped from a cage, and would ride through the woods singing and praying and thanking God that here, at least, there were none to be offended at his exuberant religion and to tell him that he must restrain himself.

One day as he was enjoying himself with shout and song and prayer, whom should he see riding toward him but the deacon of the Congregational church at Belpre, whom he speaks of as "much respected," "a very sober man, and just about as good as any man ever was without heartfelt religion." On being asked what ailed him, he informed the good man that he had been nearly repressed to death by his stay

among the formal Yankees, and that he was merely giving vent to his feelings for the good and the joy of his soul. "And now, deacon," said he, "right here on this ridge, where we will interrupt nobody and nobody interrupt us, we must get down and pray to God till he converts your soul. If I can get you converted we can go to Belpre and scare your cold, stiff Congregational preacher and the devil off, and if you will stand by me we can take all austere Yankeedom in spite of opposition."

He says: "Down I leaped from my horse, and said to the deacon, 'Get down; you must be converted right here. Come, get down, or I'll pull you off. The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.'"

Seeing that there was no escape, for Cartwright had his horse by the bridle, the deacon deliberately dismounted, and kneeled down; but he could not be prevailed upon to pray, though he was evidently in conflict of spirit.

"At length," says Cartwright, "he took a long breath and uttered a piteous groan. I cried, 'Amen! Pray on, brother; thou art not far from the kingdom.' All at once he stood erect on his knees, with a

heavenly smile on his countenance. Then he uttered, 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men! I am happy in God!'"

"From this out, the balance of the year," says Cartwright, "we had success and a religious spirit that caused the people to love loud preaching, and even loud shouting, without giving them the headache."

It is not usually considered within the province of a Christian minister, when presenting a child to God in baptism, to dictate as to the name by which the child shall be called, nor would such dictation ordinarily be taken in good part by parents or guardians; but in this also Peter Cartwright was capable of the extraordinary. It was in the year 1861 or 1862, while he was presiding elder of the Springfield District of the Illinois Conference, that this strange incident occurred. In the presence of a large company of people, nearly all of whom were strangers to him, a mother, with strong emotion, had presented her infant son for baptism. The child was in his arms, and his hand was uplifted, ready to perform the rite, when, on making the usual request, "Name this child," he was astonished to hear the answer, "Jefferson

Davis." The war was then in progress. Tens of thousands had already given their lives in that awful strife. Sectional feeling was intense and bitter, and "Jefferson Davis" was a name abhorred by every loyal lover of the Union. Could he give the boy that name? Could he, in the presence of man and God, fasten upon this child in helpless infancy such odium as the name must bring? The congregation waited in breathless silence. The mother looked up expectant through her tears. For a moment the preacher paused. Then he gave the boy back to his mother, unbaptized, and dismissed the congregation. All that night the preacher gave himself to earnest thought and prayer, wondering what would be the outcome of this thing. But early in the morning a little lad came riding up with a message from the father and mother of the child, bidding him come in haste and baptize the boy, as they had decided to give him another name.

"Glory to God who still reigneth!" cried Peter Cartwright. "I quickly followed the boy to his home, and with pleasure bade them good morning. After a little preparation the child was presented to me with the name of George Washington. A thrill of

joy ran all over me. I thanked God, and dedicated the child to him with that revered name. The scene was an affecting one; we all wept and prayed, and praised God, who changes our purposes as seemeth to him good."

CHAPTER VI

THE WESTERN DELEGATE

In the fall of 1815, when Peter Cartwright had just entered his thirty-first year, he was elected a delegate from the Tennessee Annual Conference to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. From that time until his retiring from the active ranks of the ministry, in 1869, he was honored by an almost unbroken series of elections to the General Conference, being chosen a delegate thirteen times, and taking his place in twelve of the quadrennial sessions of that great legislative body. So for more than half a century he stood among the leaders of his Church, helping to shape the policies and determine the destiny of Methodism.

Even as a young man he was a conservative, viewing with distrust any proposed change in the policy or usage of the Church, and standing resolutely for the defense of the fathers. May not this be accounted for in part by the influence of Bishop Asbury? Speaking of his first election to the General

Conference, Cartwright says: "After the election was over, Bishop Asbury called us (that is, the delegates elected) to his room, and then and there told us about the dissatisfaction that had made its appearance among some of the preachers with the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, explained the cause, and advised us to hold fast to the landmarks of Discipline with a firm grasp. His whole soul seemed to go out after the unity of Methodism, and to adopt every prudential measure to prevent any schism among us. . . . This was the last Conference in the West that we were permitted to see Bishop Asbury." Before the meeting of the General Conference the beloved bishop was dead. How weighty, therefore, must these words have been, coming almost as the last will and testament of the sainted Asbury.

Cartwright thus describes the memorable scene when, during the session of that General Conference at Baltimore, the body of the bishop was brought from its first resting place near Fredericksburg, Virginia, and laid in the vault prepared for it beneath the pulpit of the Eutaw Street Church:

"The reinterment of this great and good man presented a scene of the most thrilling

tterest that I ever beheld. The body was llowed from the Light Street to the Eutaw treet Church by a vast concourse of people. tt the head of the procession marched ishop McKendree, the faithful colleague of e departed Asbury; next followed the embers of the General Conference, and st came the people in almost unnumbered ousands. Bishop McKendree pronounced e funeral oration, and many were the ars shed by the weeping attendants; and e mortal body of the venerable Bishop sbury was laid to rest till the general esurrection."

As Peter Cartwright turned from this ene to the business of the General Conerence he must have remembered this olemn advice, this last injunction of Fran is Asbury: "Hold fast to the landmarks f Discipline with a firm grasp!" It seems kely that his policy of conservatism, which as manifest at once and grew stronger nrough the years, was not unrelated to Bishop Asbury's advice.

He usually spoke extempore, and often mpromptu. Bishop Morris says of him, As a Conference debater, he was most successful when he made the least preparation; e could fire offhand better than he could

with dead rest." Or, as he himself expressed it in the General Conference of 1856,[1] "He could not make splendid sermons: he was not born in that fix. He went in for offhand cracks—offhand cracks with him forever. With him it was crack and fire, either running or on the wing."

But we must not conclude that his words were the hasty expression of immature thought, or that they were lightly received by the Conference. These same "offhand cracks" flashed from a mind well stocked with ideas, and were driven home by the power of intense conviction. Out of a rich fund of experience and with a rare poise of common sense he spoke with a directness and a virility which always commanded attention and often won the day. The incomplete reports of the General Conference proceedings give an inadequate impression of his contributions to the debates. Apart from the personality of the speaker, and robbed of much of their quaintness of expression and their droll turnings of thought, his speeches do not show for what they were worth in the day of their delivery. Dr. Abel Stevens, who sat with him in the

[1] Quoted from the report of the General Conference of 1856.

General Conference and had an intimate personal acquaintance with him, gives his own impressions as follows: "Should we attempt an intellectual portrait of Peter Cartwright we should summarily say that he is characterized by good sense and good humor. We know not that we can better describe him. He speaks frequently, though not inordinately, and we challenge an instance of weak or irrelevant remark to be produced from his speeches. They are, in fact, especially noticeable for their direct though sometimes rough pertinency. He strikes right at the object before him, and never fails to hit it; and he has that highest characteristic of the highest deliberative wisdom—brevity, sententiousness. . . . His humor is always spontaneous, always ready. It sometimes cuts sharply, but is usually genial and generous, relieving rather than exasperating the case."

Prior to the session of 1844 we have only the bare minutes of the General Conference, with no attempt at a full report of speeches and debates. Attached to the minutes of 1844 we have a very good report of the great debates which signalized that session, and beginning with 1848 we have the proceedings of the General Conference reported

with a fair degree of completeness in the files of its daily papers. So, though from allusions in his autobiography and in his later speeches and from the bare record of the General Conference minutes we can trace Peter Cartwright's treatment of the main questions even from 1816, the earliest of his speeches which have come down to us are those of the session of 1844, when, nearly fifty-nine years of age, he was attending the General Conference for the seventh time.

In speaking on the 21st of May, 1844, in opposition to a report proposing the limiting of the term of a presiding elder to four consecutive years, he said: "I think this resolution contemplates trammeling, curtailing, and eventually destroying the official power of the bishops. I do not attribute such intention to the speakers on the other side, and to the friends of this report. But it may be within the recollection of many members of this Conference that this resolution is of the same family of little brats that have squeaked against presiding elders for thirty years. It must be so. It cannot be otherwise. It has its identity, its family features and flesh-marks, so that all will identify it. Now, I never

was a favorite with the bishops in my life, and have been sadly cast down because I could not rise into their notice. But so it is, and I must submit to my fate. . . . I know that some of us old men have been kept a long time in the office; but I appeal to the bishops that I never asked an office at their hands, and I have taken it as I would take up my cross. . . . I am not prepared to talk about old Conferences, but I have been a citizen of the valley of the Mississippi for these fifty years, and I do not know where they get their accumulated numbers of talented men. I suppose lumber accumulates sometimes. And now, sir, if they please to come out to my country, I will give them up my office of presiding elder, and they may hold it as long as they like, world without end. Instead of accumulating in these cities where they are certainly too thick to thrive, let them come into my country and I will find them work there; or pitch them on to Oregon, or Texas, or California, where they can colonize for themselves, and then they will be kings of that country and do as they like."

In the reports of the General Conference of 1852 we find another characteristic speech. A resolution had been introduced

providing that, under certain conditions, the Liberia Mission Conference should be allowed to organize itself into an independent Church, under the title of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa; and that, in case of such organization, a bishop should be elected and ordained for the Church in Liberia. As a substitute for this resolution the following had been offered: "That the General Conference recommend to the bishops that they make arrangements so that one of their number shall visit Liberia once or more during the coming four years, as they shall judge expedient." Speaking for the substitute, Peter Cartwright said:[1]

"Now, what was there about that sickly, deathly climate which has been introduced as an argument against that substitute? That it was a sickly climate, he was not prepared to deny. But several of his brethren seemed to have an idea that a man could not spend one night on the shores of Africa without giving his life as a forfeit for his hardihood. Our last superintendent came back as fat as a lion. Several other brethren had returned well and sound. He thought that no man who was afraid to go

[1] Quoted from the report of the General Conference of 1852.

o Africa ought to be elected a bishop, and e would go against him if they would let im know it. Suppose a dozen or two hould die, they had forty candidates for ne office—there was no end to the chapter. He could produce twenty men who would ay, 'If you will elect me, I will go to frica.' There was hardly a candidate for he office that would not go. Some little ervous misgiving might come up now and nen, but these would soon be smoothed way. There was as ready a road to eaven from Africa as from the United States. . . . He was in favor of the substiute."

In the great debates on the slavery question which swept the General Conference of 1844 and resulted in the dividing of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Peter Cartwright took a prominent part. He had been a lifelong friend of the negro, and an earnest defender of what he claimed was the historic position of Methodism in opposition to slavery; but he had no sympathy with the methods of the ultra-abolitionists, and deprecated what he called their "dreadful tirade of abuse on the South" which "threw the subject into the arena of politics." On the question of a slaveholding

ministry, however, he found no ground for compromise; and he stood with the anti-slavery forces of the Conference both in the case of Rev. Francis A. Harding, who, as a slaveholder, had been suspended from his ministry by the Baltimore Conference and had brought up an appeal from this action, and also in the case of Bishop Andrew, about whom, as a slaveholding bishop, the final great battle was fought. Speaking afterward of his position in this controversy, he says: "Those of us who believed slavery an evil, though not sinful in all cases, saw at once that it was utterly impossible for Bishop Andrew to travel at large through the Methodist connection, and discharge the important duties of that office with acceptability and usefulness, unless he would give the General Conference assurances that he would, as soon as practicable, free himself from this impediment. But this he absolutely refused to do."

The motion which finally prevailed, by a vote of 111 to 69, was offered as a substitute by J. B. Finley, of Ohio, and reads as follows: "Whereas, The Discipline of our Church forbids the doing anything calculated to destroy our itinerant general superintendency, and whereas Bishop Andrew

has become connected with slavery by marriage and otherwise, and this act having drawn after it circumstances which in the estimation of the General Conference will greatly embarrass the exercise of his office as an itinerant general superintendent, if not in some places entirely prevent it; therefore, resolved, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains."

It was on the afternoon of the 28th of May that Peter Cartwright spoke in favor of this substitute. In the morning Bishop Andrew had delivered his impassioned defense in which he declared: "The editor of The Christian Advocate [1] has prejudiced this case. He makes me the scapegoat of all the difficulties which abolition excitement has gotten up at the North. I am the only one to blame, in his opinion, should mischief grow out of this case. But I repeat, if I have sinned against the Discipline, I refuse not to die."

Finley, of Ohio, had followed with an address in which he stated bluntly that Bishop Andrew was indeed responsible, and should be held responsible, for the unfor-

[1] Dr Thomas E. Bond.

tunate condition in which they found themselves. "He has become a slaveholder," said Finley. "I ask you, sir, whose fault is this? It is his own voluntary act, in view of all the circumstances. This voluntary act has thrown this great body of ministers into this tremendous state of agitation, of which he could now relieve us, if he would, by his resignation."

Winans, of Mississippi, had declared that the Baltimore delegation, in forcing this issue, were championing the cause of abolition at the sacrifice of the union of North and South; and in their pretense of friendship were as one who, coming with a kiss, should thrust a poisoned dagger into his side.

Then Cartwright secured the floor; but, as the time for adjournment had come, he did not speak until the afternoon session. The feeling on both sides was most intense. A sense of impending calamity pervaded the whole assembly. But even so Cartwright did not fail to show some play of his accustomed humor. He alluded to the wide range of the speakers who had preceded him, and said he must ask to be excused if he should happen to touch the subject. Answering the argument that the action pro-

posed was "abolitionism" and was opposed to the established usage of the Church, he said:

"Now, sir, I will say that, in all my long years of relation to and acquaintance with Methodism and Methodist preachers, I never heard one who did not oppose slavery from stem to stern. And they did it in all good conscience, privately and publicly. And as reference was made yesterday by the speaker who quoted Emory's work, to the unsettled state of the question, I want it to be remembered that, at that early day, and through all the squabbles and difficulties through which the Church waded, there was not an advocate for slavery to be found amongst Methodist preachers."

Referring to the statement that any man elected to the episcopacy from the South was likely to become involved in slaveholding, from which he could not free himself, he said: "Why, my dear sir, this is all humbuggery, and nothing else. It was once my misfortune to become by heirship the owner of slaves. I could have pleaded with truth, and certainty of sympathetic responses, the disabilities of the law; but no, sir, I did not do so; I shouldered my responsibility, and resolved to be, like Cæsar's wife, be-

yond suspicion. I took them to my State, set them free, gave them land, and built them a house, and they made more money than ever I did by my preaching. . . . I stand at this day security for more than two hundred negroes whom I helped to set free."

In a sort of running fire at the speakers on the other side, he said: "Now, my brother talked about his tremendous disposition. He'd fight anyway—on his feet, or on his knees, or on his back; and he wouldn't yield nohow you could fix it. Well, I've no disposition to fight that brother. He'll find plenty to do, however. I was a little amused at my learned friend from Georgia, a Christian and a gentleman, I believe, but he diverted me with his Latin that he had quoted. It brought to mind a little anecdote about a fellow somewhere in the Georgia swamps who had been elected to some little office in the county—police officer or constable—and he had to serve a writ upon some man who, when pursued, gave him the dodge and plunged into one of the swamps. The constable did not like to follow him there, so he returned his writ with this explanation: 'In swampum et non comeatum.' I want to pay my respects to the little

earned brother who would not disturb the air on the head of a bald-headed man. What I want to come at is this: We sometimes get warm and heated in debate. As to my temperament, I am cool and deliberate and good-humored. But you know, sir, in the course of this debate we have been threatened. Now, I didn't like this. I never myself threaten except when I am in a bad temper, and a man that is a man is not going to be scared because I threaten him."

When the report of the "Committee of Nine," the so-called "Plan of Separation," was introduced, and, after discussion, was adopted by the vote of a large majority of both the Northern and the Southern delegates, Peter Cartwright spoke against it and recorded his vote with the small minority that opposed it to the end. "He was willing," he said,[1] "to go for this proposition and this alone, to lay the whole case before the people during the next four years, and if the next General Conference come up instructed to enact this measure, they would have some excuse for doing so. He had discharged his duty in the face of God and

[1] Quoted from the report of the General Conference of 1844.

man, and he would go home with a quie conscience."

Years afterward, speaking of his actio in this matter, he said: "Though I stoo alone among the delegates, my colleagues of my own beloved Illinois Conference, i my vote against all these revolutionary an divisive measures in the General Conference it afforded me great pleasure to learn tha my course in the General Conference was approved by an overwhelming majority of the preachers and members of our Con- ference. And it still affords me unspeak- able pleasure to know that I shall not have to answer before my final Judge for the sin of dividing the Methodist Episcopal Church, a Church that, under God, I am indebted to for all that I have and am."

CHAPTER VII

THE PRESIDING ELDER

In the autumn of 1868, at the regular session of the Illinois Conference, a remarkable thing happened, of which Bishop Janes writes as follows: "On the 22nd of September, 1868, as the presiding bishop of the Illinois Conference, I performed an act that had no precedent, and will have no repetition. . . . I refer to my appointment of Rev. Peter Cartwright, D.D., for the fiftieth time, as presiding elder of a district. This appointment finds its sublimity and interest in the fact of its being the half-hundredth appointment. In this particular Dr. Cartwright as presiding elder, and myself as bishop, stand 'unrivaled and alone.' There has been one remarkable event in each of our lives. . . . We need have no fear that anyone will take this crown from us. It is not reasonable to suppose the transaction will ever be duplicated."

So, at the age of eighty-three, after sixty-four strenuous years as a traveling preacher, Peter Cartwright set his face to

round out his half century as a presiding elder.

It was Bishop Asbury who first appointed him to this office. With his marvelous gift for reading men, Asbury did not fail to see the peculiar fitness of this young preacher for this most important position; and in the fall of 1812 he appointed him to the Wabash District in the newly organized Tennessee Conference.

At that time Cartwright was only twenty-seven years old, and he felt that his youth and the defects of his early education made him wholly unfit for the office. He says: "I told Bishop Asbury that I deliberately believed that I ought not to be appointed presiding elder, for I was not qualified for the office; but he told me there was no appeal from his judgment. At the end of six months I wrote to him, begging a release from the post he had assigned me; but when he returned an answer, he said I must abide his judgment, and stand in my lot to the end of the time. I continued, accordingly, in the service, but the most of the year was gloomy to me, feeling that I had not the first qualification for the office of a presiding elder."

What were the qualities of this man

which brought him to the office in spite of his shrinking from the position, and kept him there for half a century in spite of all episcopal precedent against such continuous appointment?

He was a keen student of human nature. He knew men. He might well have said with Asbury, "You study books; I study men." He read books as he had opportunity—eagerly, retentively—and made splendid use of what he had gained by reading. But one subject he was always studying, whether in books or in his own heart or in the lives of others. That subject was Man. He quickly discovered the strength and the weakness of men, saw where they could do most good and least harm, and gave to every man his work. With rare wisdom, born of wedded common sense and experience, he directed the preachers and administered the affairs of his district.

He was a strategist of broad and clear vision. When the campaign was being planned or the battle was being pushed he was quick to determine the true lines of march, and to seize the points of vantage. In those days of marvelous growth, when the population was sweeping westward so swiftly that circuits were quickly develop-

ing into districts, and districts into Annual Conferences, the presiding elder had great need for strategic wisdom; and in this few could excel Peter Cartwright.

He was preëminently a leader. With a magnificent physical endowment which was sure to win admiration, especially in that heroic age of American Methodism, with a strong, imperious mind which dared to hold its convictions against all opposition, with a will indomitable in the unswerving purpose of a brave soul, he was bound to take the lead. He had hope to plan and strength to bear and courage to endure. With an enthusiastic love for Christ and for Methodism which counted toil but blessed opportunity and hardship but privilege, he led men where the fight was hottest; and they gladly followed him.

He was a strong, evangelistic preacher in a day when a presiding elder was expected to excel in preaching and to be a leader in soul-winning throughout his whole district. He held four quarterly meetings each year within the bounds of each charge, devoting to each a Saturday and a Sunday, with ample time for sermons as well as for the love feast and the Lord's Supper. And when the fields were promising and the time

was propitious he tarried for protracted meetings in the winter or camp meeting in the summer, and as an evangelist he was almost without a peer.

He was a splendidly efficient presiding elder in districts which usually consisted of but seven or eight circuits, and he strongly deprecated the tendency to increase the number of charges under a presiding elder, because he clearly saw that this increase would make impossible such work as he had been doing, and would eventually change the very conception of the duties of the office. He says: "Our districts in all the Western world are very different from down East and Northeast. There they have from thirty to forty appointments in one presiding elder's district; most of their quarterly meetings are held on week days or evenings, not embracing a Sabbath. The presiding elder goes round mostly to preside in trials of complaints or appeals, and as a kind of fiscal agent. Thus, no matter how talented he may be, his labors and usefulness as a preacher are thrown into the shade of comparative obscurity; and by the anti-Methodistic usages of these large districts the presiding elder's office is not appreciated, nor can it be on this plan; hence the

hue and cry against the office. Go back to old Methodist preacher usage; let every quarterly meeting embrace a Sabbath, and then the old itinerant missionary will work well; but persist in cutting up the work and making little stations, then appeal to the cupidity of these small fields of labor, and you may expect the table of the General Conference to groan under the petitions of the oppressed to change the office of presiding elder, till Congregationalism is the order of the day."

And surely he had strong ground for faith in the old order in which the presiding eldership, as he knew it, had taken so important a part. Within the years of his own ministry, and in no small degree under the impulse of his own life, he had seen in American Methodism marvels of growth unparalleled in the history of the Christian Church. He had seen the army of her preachers, in answer to the call of God, come out from the homes of the common people and from the school of their daily toil, and, strong in the matchless complement of bishop and presiding elder and circuit rider, take and hold that Western world for Christ. He has seen societies springing up in the wilderness, and churches

rising in the newborn villages, and Christian institutions leavening and dominating the life of swiftly growing cities, under the rule and practice of Methodist discipline. He had seen the small and despised people which constituted the Church of his mother grow to be one of the mightiest of Christian denominations, numbering her children by millions in the various branches of her great family, and standing in the forefront of usefulness, not only in the United States, but in Christ's kingdom throughout the world. What wonder that having seen such things, under the old order, and having toiled, as few men could, in helping to make them possible, he deprecated a change which seemed to him to be weakening the very heart of Methodist polity—a change which was destined to take from the office of presiding elder much of what, to him, constituted its glory and its power, and finally to take from it even its historic name which he bore so heroically for fifty years!

At that session of the Illinois Conference which was held at Quincy, Illinois, in September, 1868, when Bishop Janes appointed Peter Cartwright to his fiftieth year of service as a presiding elder, the Conference voted to hold at its next session a Jubilee

in honor of the man who would then have completed these fifty wonderful years.

When the appointed time arrived, on the 24th of September, 1869, a great company gathered at Lincoln, Illinois, filling the large assembly hall, and surging about its doors and windows in eager effort to have even a look at the man whom the Church was delighting to honor. And it was a sight well worth seeing, this brave old soldier of Jesus Christ sitting upon the platform surrounded by a throng of friends who had come with gifts and congratulations to pay their tribute of love and respect to the oldest minister in the active ranks of the Methodist Episcopal host. Well might the young men climb up to the window to get if they could a glimpse of him. They would never again see the like. He had joined the Western Conference in 1804, when, in its sole glory west of the Alleghanies, it stretched from the Eastern mountains to the Missouri River, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. He had traveled with Asbury, and had been personally acquainted with every bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the single exception of Bishop Coke. He had ridden a circuit four years before Robert Fulton made his first

voyage in the Clermont, and twenty-seven years before the first passenger was carried upon a steam railway in the United States. Twelve years had passed since he had written: "I have lived to see this vast Western wilderness rise and improve, and become wealthy without a parallel in the history of the world; I have outlived every member of my father's family; I have no father, no mother, no brother, no sister living; I have outlived every member of the class I joined in 1800; I have outlived every member of the Western Conference in 1804, save one or two; I have outlived every member of the first General Conference that I was elected to in Baltimore in 1816, save five or six; I have outlived all my early bishops; I have outlived every presiding elder that I ever had when on circuit. . . . I certainly have toiled and suffered enough to kill a thousand men, but I do not complain. Thank God for the health, strength, and grace that have borne me up and borne me on."

And now he had added twelve years more to the record of his ministry and was about to join the ranks of the veterans.

Bishops and editors and other prominent leaders of the Church came from the East

and from the West to take part in the Jubilee, or sent letters expressing their love for the man and their appreciation of his remarkable career.

William Morley Punshon, as president of the Wesleyan Conference in Canada, wrote: "We in England have long been familiar with Dr. Cartwright's name and labors—labors apostolic in their extent, and prosecuted with a bravery like that of chivalry, and with a fidelity to God and to the souls of men which neither opposition nor discouragement could frighten. It rejoices me to think that these services, which God will reward in his own good time, are not to be forgotten by those on whose behalf they have been rendered."

Bishop Janes wrote: "None but a man of inherent power, of careful observation, of great sagacity, of comprehensive views, of sound judgment, and of practical wisdom, could have taken and held with honor and usefulness this high position in the Church for fifty years. This fact stamps him an eminent man. It also establishes his Christian integrity; a man so prominent in the public eye, so constantly under the inspection of his brethren, undergoing fifty formal examinations by his Conference,

could not have endured the scrutiny, and retained the confidence and affections of the Church and its administrative authorities, without being faithful to his trust and true to his God."

Bishop Morris and Bishop Simpson also sent letters expressing their interest and good wishes; and Bishop Ames, unable to be present as he had hoped to be, sent Dr. John P. Newman, afterward Bishop Newman, to represent him. Dr. Newman took as his theme, "The Four Peters—Peter the Great, Peter the Hermit, Peter the Fisherman, and Peter the Cartwright." "Now, look abroad upon your mighty West," said he; "who was better adapted to grapple with the peculiarities of the age, and with the peculiar temperament of the people and their religious demands, than Dr. Cartwright? And the results of his ministry in the State of Illinois are a thousand ministers, or more perhaps, regular and local, thirty thousand members, and four million dollars' worth of church property. These are but the results, briefly stated, of a ministry replete with toil, full of cares, crowded with anxieties, and to-night crowned with triumph. . . . He has impressed his sturdy common sense upon the educational, politi-

cal, benevolent, and religious enterprises of the West."

Bishop Thomson was present and gave an address entitled "The Heroes of Methodism in the West"; and other addresses and letters filled out an afternoon of intense interest, and continued, through an evening session, far into the night.

Following an address by the venerable Peter Akers, long his colleague in the Illinois Conference and also in the General Conference, Peter Cartwright rose and gave his valedictory in the great school of the Methodist itinerancy.

It is "Father Cartwright" who is speaking, the old battle-scarred and battle-worn soldier of the cross. We are almost painfully conscious of his feebleness as we listen to his opening words: "I have thought that I have been a man of some courage, but I must frankly confess I am fairly beat to-day; and if this audience would excuse me I would not utter five words. I am in very poor plight to speak, as I have lost my voice since I was sunstruck this summer was a year, and it will be with difficulty that I can make this large audience hear." But the sturdy spirit is not broken by the weight of the years,

nor does the stout heart quail; the fountain of humor is not dry, nor is the vision of faith narrowed; and before he has finished, the great congregation is swayed by him somewhat as in the olden days—now stirred to emotion, now moved to laughter, and now thrilled by his undying enthusiasm as he declares: "I do not want to stagnate. If I was a young man, if I was in mature manhood, I could have no fear, for by the blessing of God I would carve my way through the world."

It is with true humility that he looks into the faces of the admiring friends and tells something of his life-story: "All these honors that these brethren have heaped upon me, and not grudgingly I presume, amount to very little in elevating my feelings. I am deeply humble before God, and candidly confess, and feel as I confess, that I have been an unprofitable servant to the Church of God. . . . I have done nothing upon God's earth but what was my duty to do." But humility does not deter him from declaring the joys and the triumphs of the grace of God by which he has been able to fight a good fight through the years. He speaks of his birth in "Old Virginia," of his early immigration to the "Far West,"

of his soldier father of whom he was always proud, of his Christian mother for whom he was always thankful, and of the faithful wife who had shared with him so long the lights and shadows of his ministry. He says: "I am thankful that I have been permitted to associate in the toils of my itinerant life a worthy companion that never hindered me from traveling or preaching, that never scolded me for leaving her destitute and lonesome, but always urged me on to do what I thought was my duty. We have lived together rising sixty years, and I suppose I have the oldest Methodist preacher's wife in the world—traveling preacher, I mean. I have seven children living, rising fifty grandchildren, thirty-seven great-grandchildren, and God only knows what is to come next."

He speaks of his call to preach which impelled him, when an ignorant and inexperienced lad, to enter the ministry of Jesus Christ, and of his struggle for knowledge through the busy years; how William McKendree, then his elder, had outlined for him a course of study and had helped him in it, and how from that day he had eagerly sought to own and to know good books; and how though some had accused him of

being an enemy of education, he had gladly given what he could for the support of schools and colleges, and had even been made a Doctor of Divinity. "Through the influence of my venerable friend, Dr. Akers," he says, "I got D. D. stuck to my name. I believe the Doctor labored hard to get it, more for his interest than my profit. If I misjudge him, forgive me; but he was lonesome, for he was the only D. D. we had, and he wanted company. The very day I was presented with it I was taken with a pain in my back, and I did not know what I would do."

He does not fail to tell of the trials and sufferings which he has faced. He has toiled hard and has endured much through the sixty-nine years of his ministry. "I could tell you a thousand tales that you would not believe of the scenes through which I have traveled," he says. "I have suffered a good deal in body, in mind, and in circumstances." But these words are not spoken in complaint. He is not discontented with his wages, now that his life's work is nearly done. "I thank God this day that I have had a religion that has paid me as I went along." This is his verdict of how he has been treated while spending his

life for Christ. He is not stopping now because he is unwilling to continue on the same terms. He would gladly go on, if he could. He is not even weary in spirit; he is only tired in the flesh. "And now I retire from the regular work, not because I do not like it," cries this joyous servant of God, "for I say to you one and all, to the young preachers and to the old, that with all the losses and crosses, labors and sufferings peculiar to the life of a Methodist traveling preacher, I would take, if it were left to my choice, the same track over again with the same religion to bear me up, rather than be President of the United States."

So spoke Peter Cartwright, a good workman of Jesus Christ, and for three years had rest; and after that he went into that country where the workmen do not grow weary, and where they share forever their Lord's own joy.

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